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GEORGE WASHINGTON



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Martha Washington.

Facsimile in colors of Gilbert Stuart's painting, owned by the Boston Athenæum.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

BY

Worthington Chauncey Ford

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II



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GEORGE WASHINGTON

CHAPTER I

CO-OPERATION



REATLY satisfied by the success of his manœuvres, Washington turned his march towards the North River, moving slowly to save his army from the intense heat. The enemy had been too much deranged by the retreat to be capable of making a sortie from New York, while the rumors of a French fleet off the coast gave the contest a new turn. Heretofore, masters of the sea, the English could move freely and swiftly to any point on the coast; and the capture of Boston, or Savannah, although it carried with it no control over the country behind it, was trumpeted as a great and telling victory. With a strong navy in opposition, capable of contesting the mastery enjoyed, the English must defeat it or measure their resources with

greater care. Awaiting a provision fleet from Ireland, bringing supplies greatly needed, the British had cause for anxiety and misgiving. A siege in New York would mean a repetition of the Boston failure, yet to avoid a siege they must meet the French before the lines on land and sea could be firmly drawn.

Washington only regretted that this helping fleet had not reached America a few days earlier. It could then have penned the English ships and transports in the Delaware and found them an easy conquest. "Sir Harry," Washington reflected soon after, "must have had better luck than is commonly dispensed to men of his profession under such circumstances, if he and his troops had not shared (at least) the fate of Burgoyne." The delay thus involved a capital misfortune. To make the most of the situation Washington proposed to cross the river about fifty miles to the north of the city, and, marching down to the British lines, to prevent egress from that side, and to cut off supplies. He carefully composed and circulated reports of being about to concentrate all the American force against New York, to awaken the jealousy of the British in every quarter and every shape.

No definite plan could yet be adopted, though two presented themselves as worthy of study. To attack New York was desirable, and would, if successful, be accounted a brilliant stroke. To take Rhode Island would offer distinct advantages, and would cripple the English sorely. Sullivan, then in the east, was ordered to call for militia, engage pilots, and hold himself in readiness to co-operate with the French, should Rhode Island be deemed the most important object. D'Estaing

wished to destroy the British fleet in New York harbor, but soundings showed that his larger ships could be brought up only with great difficulty and risk. Washington had crossed the river and was at White Plains, when he learned of these facts. Without any delay he put two brigades, commanded by Lafayette, under marching orders for Rhode Island, while the French fleet turned in the same direction. To assist in council General Greene was sent by Washington, while Steuben, seeking a command that would have produced utter confusion among the field officers, was requested by Congress to attend on Sullivan. General Greene, though Quartermaster-general, was to command one division of the troops near Rhode Island, militia as well as regulars, and the second division was to fall to Lafayette. With such an array it was thought success must be assured.

Left before New York with a force somewhat inferior in number to the English, Washington was called upon to give his opinion on an expedition against the Indians of the west. In June word had come from Albany of some outbreaks among the Senecas; and representatives of that tribe being in camp Washington had expressed himself with some vigor. "I told them of their hostilities, and that as soon as the British army were gone, if they did not immediately cease them, I would turn our whole force against them and the other Indian nations, who have taken a like bloody part against us, and cut them to pieces." This had no deterrent effect, as the English had arranged for allies, and Butler and Brandt were already overrunning Pennsylvania. The garrison at Fort Pitt could do little, and

Congress wished to send a large force to put down the unfriendly Indians, asking Washington to detach a part of his army, sufficient for two expeditions against the Indian country. He could not but discourage such undertakings at this late season, for which no preparations had been made, and which must weaken the main army to a dangerous degree, while removing all possibility of reinforcing the Rhode Island venture, should it meet with a rebuff. He would wish to defer punishing the Indians till a more favorable opportunity. "We have a prospect that the British army will ere long be necessitated either to abandon the possessions they now hold and quit these States, or perhaps to do something still more disgraceful. If either should arrive, the most effectual way to chastise the Indians, and disarm them for future mischief, will be to make an expedition into Canada. By penetrating as far as Montreal, they fall of course, destitute of supplies for continuing their hostilities, and of support to stimulate their enmity."

Instead of planning such expeditions, it would have been more profitable for Congress to settle the long-pending question of the arrangement of the army. Disputes and dissatisfaction on rank daily came before the General and employed almost all his time. "Not an hour passes without new applications and new complaints about rank—and for want of a proper adjustment of this and many other essential points, our affairs are in a most irksome and injurious train. We can scarcely form a court-martial or parade a detachment in any instance, without a warm discussion on the subject of precedence." With these petty disputes, with too small a number of general officers, with cares over the

differences in the cavalry, an arm from which he expected much, and with anxieties for the future maintenance of his force, Washington awaited the issue of the Rhode Island adventure.

The details of the failure need not be given. Even before he had received a full account of the reasons leading to it, Washington foresaw that there would be room for difference between the French and the Americans. "Should the expedition fail, thro' the abandonment of the French fleet, the officers concerned will be apt to complain loudly. But prudence dictates that we should put the best face upon the matter, and to the world attribute the removal to Boston to necessity. The reasons are too obvious to need explaining. The principal one is, that our British and internal enemies would be glad to improve the least matter of complaint and disgust against and between us and our new allies into a serious purpose." He wrote to his officers to soften and palliate the affair as much as possible, lest the people should be discouraged and prejudiced against the French, thus preventing the offer of effectual zeal and assistance to the fleet. He even looked upon the storm and misfortune as an act of a wise Providence, directing them for the best of purposes. Sullivan's unwise and unguarded expressions against his allies threatened to bring to pass the very situation Washington so greatly feared ; but better counsels prevailed, and harmony and good agreement were maintained. To this the General largely contributed.

The arrival of Byron's fleet gave the English so undoubted a superiority at sea as to place the French at a disadvantage. Clinton had received orders to send

a detachment to the West Indies, to take St. Lucia. The activity in preparing for this movement led Washington to believe he was about to evacuate the city, and probably leave the country. As nearly all the supplies of flour and meat of the Continental army were drawn from the States west and south of the North River, it was of superlative importance to keep a passage across that river free. To defend the French vessels, now at Boston, was of equal importance. To accomplish two such remote objects, with the enemy evidently about to move, was difficult. The army was divided : one division was posted on the North River to maintain a passage ; another was to lie between that river and the Connecticut, in stages so close as to be able to support one another, should an occasion arise. Whether the British intended a general or a partial movement ; to the east, up the North River, or to the West Indies ; to Canada or to Boston, could not be discovered. The presence of the commissioners under the conciliatory bills, and the rather foolish activity of some members of that commission, gave occasion to the opinion that the English had no settled plan, but were awaiting orders from the ministry. The offer of peace accompanied by threats of extermination could not win confidence.

In this interval the matter of an expedition into Canada was considered. It was a favorite scheme with Congress, and, after the retirement of Schuyler, was looked upon as the readiest means of building up the reputation of Gates, perhaps making him superior to the Commander-in-chief, if crowned with a brilliant success. The collapse of the latest expedition, from which

only its commander, Lafayette, emerged with credit, was still in memory when a new suggestion was laid before Washington. With a touch of political shrewdness he referred the matter to Gates, pleading his wide knowledge of the country and the pains he must have expended to inform himself on the leading points. This move obliged Gates to draw up a plan which received a formal endorsement from Washington as "liable to fewest objections" and affording a "reasonable prospect of success." But it could not be undertaken while the English remained in the States, and as no disposition was developed to evacuate the city the idea was abandoned. Washington had gratified Congress, placed Gates on record, and obtained some magazines ostensibly for the Canadian enterprise, but really for the use of his own army.

Lafayette, already firm in the affections of his chief, would have commanded a northern expedition, and seriously considered the chance of being called, until Washington assured him of the unlikelihood of his being needed. Somewhat restive under the irksome garrison duties at Rhode Island he took offense at certain sentences in a proclamation of the English commissioners, reflecting on the French, and sent a challenge to Lord Carlisle, the president of the commission. Neither serious reasoning nor pleasantry could divert him from this step, a bit of generous chivalry that was excusable on many grounds, but defensible on none. To vindicate the honor of his country, to win applause as its champion, was intoxicating to his sense, but easily made ridiculous by common sense. Washington attempted to dissuade him, and D'Estaing reasoned with him, but

without effect. Lord Carlisle replied with perfect courtesy and good will that he was answerable only to his country and King for his public conduct and language ; so the incident ended with credit to all concerned.

More serious problems pressed for solution. Gouverneur Morris, whose shrewdness of perception was often veiled in flippant expression, thought the enemy could not continue the war. Washington retorted, Can we carry on the war much longer ? and answered, " Certainly NO, unless some measures can be devised and speedily executed to restore the credit of our currency, restrain extortion, and punish forestallers." The heavy depreciation of the currency had brought purchases to a standstill, and every new emission brought the army to a worse pass and offered the greatest obstacle to an active campaign. The General knew its effects upon his command, because he daily saw before him the evidences of decay. " The high prices of every necessary ; the little, indeed no benefit, which officers have derived from the intended bounty of Congress in the article of cloathing ; the change in the establishment, by which so many of them are discontinued ; the unfortunate delay of this business, which kept them too long in suspense, and set a number of evil spirits to work ; the unsettled rank, and contradictory modes of adjusting it,—with other causes, which might be enumerated have conspired to sour the temper of the army exceedingly ; and has, I am told, been productive of a memorial or representation of some kind to Congress ; which neither directly nor indirectly did I know or even hear was in agitation, till some days after it was dispatched ; owing, as I apprehend, to the secrecy with which it was

conducted to keep it from my knowledge, as I had in a similar instance last spring discountenanced and stifled a child of the same illegitimacy in its birth." This, then, was not a picture for the day, but accurately described the condition of the army and his own relations to it for nearly five years. The advice he gave to a fellow-soldier, Andrew Lewis, of Virginia, was his ruling motive. "Ours is a kind of struggle designed, I dare say, by Providence to try the patience, fortitude, and virtue of men. None, therefore, who is engaged in it, will suffer himself, I trust, to sink under difficulties, or be discouraged by hardships. If he cannot do as he wishes, he must do what he can."

Late in October an attempt was made to re-enlist the men whose services would expire in the winter, but a general disinclination was discovered. Both the people and the army seemed daily to grow more weary of the war, if the impossibility of obtaining recruits or holding those already in the ranks could be taken as any indication. Yet Congress again mentioned Canada and proposed to ask the French to assist. The military objections displayed by Washington were unanswerable; those of policy stood on higher grounds and called for a deeper insight into the conscience of nations. What reason was there to suppose that France once in Montreal would relinquish that country? With Spain as an ally, with New Orleans in possession, and Great Britain as a defeated rival, it would require no large force in Canada to enable her to give the law to the States. "Men are very apt to run into extremes. Hatred to England may carry some into an excess of confidence in France, especially when motives of gratitude

are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favorable sentiments of our new ally, and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree. But it is a maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false step, into which we may unwarily fall." Although the suggestion apparently came from Lafayette, he feared it originated in the court of France, and concealed more than the disinterested zeal of allies. His jealousy already led him to dislike an addition to national obligations. "I would wish, as much as possible, to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable."

The season favorable to a campaign had now come to an end, for the end of November found the two armies in the same position of inactivity. The horrors of Valley Forge were not to be repeated, and the disposition of the divisions in winter quarters assured the security of the Highlands, the protection of the country, and the safety, discipline, and easy subsistence of the army. His own quarters were fixed at Middlebrook, where in a "squeezed-up room or two" he again turned to many affairs of the army, which required all his care and some degree of address to keep it from crumbling.

The officers saw others enriching themselves in many lines, and often at the expense of the public. Their virtue and endurance were tested in a hundred ways, and the extortionate prices of necessities made their wages, paid at rare intervals, seem next to nothing. Washington saw dishonesty everywhere, and laid it to the wrong cause; but his indignation was righteous. He approved the endeavors of Pennsylvania to bring "those murderers of our cause, the monopolizers, forestallers, and engrossers, to condign punishment. It is much to be lamented, that each State long ere this has not hunted them down as the pests of society, and the greatest enemies we have to the happiness of America. I would to God, that one of the most atrocious in each State was hung in gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by Haman. No punishment, in my opinion, is too great for the man, who can build his greatness upon his country's ruin." Washington knew that corruption had eaten so far into the body politic that even a member of Congress had speculated on the necessities of the army, and shamelessly made a few dollars out of them.

The remedy lay in a better representation of the States in Congress. Engaged too much by their own concerns, the States had permitted their ablest men to withdraw from the Continental body, to take the posts of profit and honor at home. He would absolutely compel their strongest men to attend Congress, and instruct them to make a thorough investigation of the causes that had produced so many disagreeable effects in the army and country. Public abuses should be corrected, and an entire reformation worked. "Without these, it

does not in my judgment require the spirit of divination to foretell the consequences of the present administration ; nor to how little purpose the States individually are framing constitutions, providing laws, and filling offices with the abilities of their ablest men. These, if the great whole is mismanaged, must sink in the general wreck, and will carry with it the remorse of thinking, that we are lost by our own folly and negligence, or the desire perhaps of living in ease and tranquillity during the expected accomplishment of so great a revolution, in the effecting of which the greatest abilities, and the honestest men our [*i.e.*, the American] world affords, ought to be employed."

A visit to Philadelphia and a conference with Congress only convinced him of its low quality, and his words gained weight by his experience. "If I was to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of men, from what I have seen, and heard, and in part know, I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation and extravagance seems to have laid fast hold of most of them. That speculation — peculation — and an insatiable thirst for riches seems to have got the better of every other consideration and almost of every order of men. That party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day whilst the momentous concerns of an empire — a great and accumulated debt — ruined finances — depreciated money — and want of credit (which in their consequences is the want of everything) are but secondary considerations, and postponed from day to day — from week to week, as if our affairs wear the most promising aspect."

Washington's visit to Philadelphia enabled him to

lay before Congress his ideas of what the lines of the approaching campaign should be. It was now the middle of January, and every expectation that the British were to leave the country had been laid aside. It was safe to assume that they would hold the places they were occupying, and the war in its present form would be continued. Three plans suggested themselves : To endeavor to expel the enemy from their stations, a most desirable object, which would, if successful, be decisive. Or, Niagara should be reduced, and thus a door opened into Canada, while nothing was done on the seacoast. Or, finally, to remain entirely on the defensive and merely make small ventures against the Indians on the one hand, and the British on the other. For the expulsion of the enemy an army of at least twenty-six thousand was necessary, a larger force than had yet been in the field. When the difficulty of obtaining recruits had been increasing for so many months, and the opportunities in other directions were many and profitable, it was almost out of the question to look for such an army. Nor was there any likelihood of subsisting it, if collected, for the state of the currency was prohibitive.

The second suggestion was to reduce Niagara, for which a smaller army but greater preparations would be required. To carry on extensive operations at such a distance would be very costly, involving immense expenditures, and against these again the currency militated. The object was less ; and it was certain that, in any case, should strenuous efforts be put forth and heavy sacrifices entailed, with the risk of a want of success, the subsequent relaxation and apathy might prove fatal.

While conducting a distant and indecisive expedition, there might be need for the utmost efforts to secure the internal defense and safety of the States, and it would be found that their resources had been turned in a wrong direction, to their destruction.

It was thus almost a matter of necessity to adopt the third plan, of remaining entirely on the defensive, except a lesser operation against the Indians to divert their ravages. This would give repose to the country, and by reducing expenditures assist Congress to relieve public credit and restore value to the currency. Even on this restricted scale much remained to be done to improve the condition of the army and prepare it for active operations in the following season. Mere frugality would not suffice ; the army, though small, should be of a firm and permanent texture. Should this plan be accepted, it might injure the credit and consequence of the continent with foreign powers, as political elements were of even greater importance than military considerations. It might tend to dispirit the people at home, and encourage the disaffected. This was a risk that demanded wisdom and courage to obviate. It was financial reasons that controlled in the plan of operations, and this is why Washington laid aside the reduction of Niagara to take up the Indian question.

He at once called upon McIntosh, then at Fort Pitt, to explore the western country, determine its watercourses, and the strength of the Indian tribes in the section to be attacked. From Schuyler he asked for all the information his long experience with Indian matters in New York could give. On Governor Clinton of New York, and Reed, now President of

Pennsylvania, he made a requisition for troops, and earnestly desired them to be obtained from those who had been driven from the frontiers, men who had a knowledge of the country, were expert marksmen, and accustomed to the irregular kind of wood-fighting practised by the Indians. There was not a detail of this expedition that was not provided for in his queries, or did not pass under his eye. When the time came to appoint a leader Washington offered the command to Gates, who declined it on the ground of a want of youth and strength. Thus it was that the opportunity fell to Sullivan, who had been selected by Washington in case Gates should not accept. Great secrecy was maintained and false rumors spread with a view to prevent any aid being sent to the Indians from Canada.

The period of rest was to be occupied in obtaining an army to cope with the British during the summer season. Congress had granted half-pay to officers for seven years from the termination of the war, but half-pay for life was wanted, and would have been more of a boon to the beneficiaries. At this time those who were poor could not obtain necessaries, and those who had property ruined themselves in keeping up the appearance due to their rank. Mutiny had occurred in some regiments, and it was believed the privates were not responsible for it, as they were supported at the public expense. Compared with the winter of 1777-'78, the army was better clothed, better fed, suffered less from sickness, and were well hutted. How to complete the regiments and fill up the battalions was the trying question. Extravagant bounties, with gifts of clothing,

were offered by the States; the continent offered a bounty in money in competition. Towns and individuals gave liberal bounties to men for very short or temporary service. These inducements tempted men who had enlisted for the war to desert, and led others to hesitate before enlisting, in the hope that still higher bounties would be given. The whole system was costly and ineffective, a temporary expedient to serve the purposes of the moment, and Washington wished for its complete abolition. Unless that was done, the regiments could not be completed.

An even greater danger for the future lay in the belief that the war was almost at an end, and would be ended without another campaign. This idea was based upon the situation of European politics, but demanded a most favorable interpretation of the known facts. Nothing that the King had said could justify this belief, and no intelligence from New York could give it any support. Every utterance of the British ministry pointed to a continuance of the war, and to renewed exertions to bring it to a successful issue. The only ground for hope was to be found in France, and as yet so little was known of her intentions that it was impossible to say what could be expected of her. With every proof of corruption and abuse around him, and having full experience of the indifference of Congress to what he regarded as vital reforms, Washington wrote to his special friends in a most desponding tone, asserting that at no time since the beginning of the war had American liberties been in such eminent danger. Faction, stock-jobbing, and the depreciated currency had fed the hopes of Great Britain that the Americans

would thus be their own conquerors. The goodly fabric, reared at the cost of so much blood and treasure, was being bartered for a little pelf, sacrificed to the greed of a few designing men. Again he called for the punishment of the speculators, forestallers, and extortioners; to sink the money by heavy taxes, and promote public and private economy. "Our cause is noble. It is the cause of mankind."

Gradually the western expedition took form. The idea of co-operation with a northern movement was abandoned, yet the preparations entered into so far deceived the British that they sent a body of men to Canada from New York. It was from Fort Pitt that the march was to be made, and by degrees the force, almost entirely regulars from the main army, was collected. Pennsylvania was not only backward in furnishing some militia, but asked for some of Washington's strength to guard the frontiers. Weakened by what he had given to Sullivan's expedition, Washington could not prevent incursions by the enemy, and was annoyed by the incessant demands for troops made upon him by the suffering States. To guard a seacoast of fifteen hundred miles, and a western frontier of nearly the same length, was a task beyond his means. The Continental vessels were lying idle at New London, not only useless for attack but requiring a large force for defense against attack. Washington suggested that they be loaned to active, enterprising men, to serve as privateers to destroy the British transports. Hardly a State was taking effectual measures to call out its quota of Continental troops, or had even energy enough to draw forth its militia. Listening to the cries of its own

people, each State called for help from Washington. He was obliged to refuse. "To please everybody is impossible; were I to undertake it, I should probably please nobody."

D'Estaing proposed to return to the States from the West Indies, and communicated his intention through Gerard, the French minister at Philadelphia. Unless his fleet could have an undoubted superiority over that of the British, little could be accomplished. Yet if he could arrive before Byron, who was bringing a reinforcement, Washington pledged himself to abandon all his undertakings, and concentrate his force in a combined attack on New York and Rhode Island. As D'Estaing was coming from Martinique, it would be a simple matter to stop at Georgia and drive out the English fleet and army in that State, while rapid movements would surprise both the posts in the north. The plan was too extensive, though more feasible than that of attacking Halifax, as the French Admiral wished, and for which the continent must supply men and provisions. Gerard had made a visit to camp, and held long and free conferences with Washington. "I have formed," he wrote to his superiors, "as high an opinion of the powers of his mind, his moderation, his patriotism, and his virtues, as I had before from common report conceived of his military talents and of the incalculable services he has rendered to his country."

It did not require much observation to see that a crisis was approaching in the finances of Congress. Issue after issue of paper was made, without any basis of credit or taxes for sinking them. Not a dollar was withdrawn and cancelled, but every false and vicious

means was taken in the attempt to bolster it into a circulation. Legal-tender quality was conferred upon it; proclamations were made threatening the most severe punishments against such as should refuse to take it at a value equal to that of gold; loan offices were opened, to get the paper back in the treasury, to be again put into circulation; the gambling element was sought by extensive lotteries;—but all in vain. The real purchasing power continually shrunk, until at this time nearly a cartload of paper was needed to purchase a cartload of flour. It was circulating so feebly that it could not call out the resources of the country; and at times it seemed to cease to circulate, a crisis that was feared more than an advance of the British.

Here was a fundamental weakness that was irreparable, save at a sacrifice the States were unwilling to make. May brought the speech of North in Parliament, in which little trace of conciliation could be found, but many threats of more strenuous efforts to conquer America. Washington cried out against the apathy of the people, dreaming of peace and independence, and steeped in the belief that Great Britain was on her knees, begging for mercy and forgiveness, and impotent to strike. Instead of completing the battalions, trifles occupied their attention. Factional and personal contests monopolized debate and paralyzed action. Never was preparation more needed. “This campaign will be *grand*,” was the warning of Washington; “and if unsuccessful, more than probably the *last* struggle of Great Britain.” Even the Continental force in the field, the skeleton of an army, was greatly dissatisfied, and the military establishment required every prop to keep

it from falling into ruin. Mutiny was only an open display of discontent ; more dangerous than that was the nursing of a sense of injustice, a feeling of being neglected, and a daily experience of the insufficiency of their pay. "I never was, much less reason have I now to be, afraid of the enemy's *arms* ; but I have no scruple in declaring to you, that I have never yet seen the time in which our affairs (in my opinion) were at so low an ebb as they are at present ; and without a speedy and capital change, we shall not be able in a very short time to call out the strength and resources of the country. The hour, therefore, is certainly come when party differences and disputes should subside, when every man (especially those in office) should with one hand and one heart, pull the same way and with all their strength. Providence has done, and I am persuaded is disposed to do, a great deal for us, but we are not to forget the fable of Jupiter and the carman."

An embarkation at New York forced Washington to consider its probable destination. It could hardly be intended for the eastward, nor were additional men needed in Canada. The occupation of Philadelphia by Howe had not produced the expected results, and would hardly be repeated. All circumstances then pointed to the southern States. Georgia was already held by the British, and the next important port was Charleston. The relief of the South was, in Washington's opinion, an object of the greatest magnitude. "I feel infinite anxiety on their account. Their internal weakness, disaffection, the want of energy, the general languor that has seized the people at large, makes me apprehend the most serious consequences. It would seem, too, as if

the enemy meant to transfer the principal weight of the war that way." The long distance and the general unhealthiness of the threatened States made it impossible to defend them from the main army; local militia and a few regulars must be their dependence. Events proved that a descent upon Virginia was intended, and having plundered and destroyed much property, chiefly private, the English again went on board their vessels and returned to New York.

On June 2d the English, under the command of Sir Henry Clinton in person, went up the North River and captured Verplanck's and Stony Points. This deprived Washington of the most convenient ferry across the river, and gave the English two very strong positions from which they could plan the reduction of the Highlands and West Point. Naturally strong posts, they could easily be made almost impregnable, and fortifications were at once thrown around them. Troubled by the possibilities opened by this event, Washington immediately began to plan to drive the British from these strongholds. Conscious of the weakness of the Continental army, the enemy made excursions into the country with impunity, to check which, Wayne was given the command of the light infantry with orders to pay particular attention to the British posts. A deserter gave information that confirmed Washington in a belief that Stony Point could be assaulted, and he submitted a plan to the very willing Wayne, providing for every contingency, and by letter and conference schooled him in the difficult task to be performed. The success of the plan was full proof of its wisdom and care for detail, but there was credit for both generals. "He improved

upon the plan recommended by me," Washington said to Congress, "and executed it in a manner that does signal honor to his judgment and to his bravery." The attempt against Verplanck's Point failed through a series of accidents.



CHAPTER II

MAINTAINING THE ARMY



VEN the careful attention paid to the Indian expedition delayed the more important matter of the army establishment. Voluntary recruits could no longer be obtained in even moderate numbers, and the wasteful system of State bounties had ceased to have any effect. The stronger States provided for their own defense at the expense of the Continental regiments; the weaker looked to their neighbors for help, but contributed little to the common defense either in men or money. Washington had long been of the opinion that an annual and systematic draft could alone supply the army with men, while permitting the hiring of substitutes would transfer the heavy cost of bounties from the States to individuals, able and willing to pay them. The British maintained their strength in the face of some difficulties in recruiting at home; so it was essential to preserve an equal proportion of strength in the Continental army.

Lord Cornwallis came to New York with about three thousand recruits for Sir Henry Clinton's army, a force

wholly insufficient to accomplish what he had planned. The long delay and comparative quiet had enabled the Americans to strengthen their position, as well as to strike the fortunate blows at Stony Point and Paulus Hook, both arranged by Washington. Seeing little chance of success at New York, Clinton turned to the south, and believed something could be done to retrieve their ill-fortune before the arrival of the French or a part of Washington's force. Disappointed in not receiving adequate support from the ministry, he wished to resign the command, and turn it over to Cornwallis. The ministry found it difficult to obtain men for the American service, and, facing a war with France and Spain, with possible trouble with other powers, jealously bound by treaty among one another in the vain attempt to preserve a fiction,—the “balance of power,”—was unable to make such detachments from its home force as Clinton demanded, and as might have been conceded under ordinary conditions. To have little to show for a summer's operations more than the burning of some Connecticut towns and the almost comic end of a foolish expedition sent out by Massachusetts against Penobscot, did not satisfy the English commander any more than merely strengthening his lines round New York. The conquest of the Carolinas would be a fit enterprise, of service in Europe as well as in America.

While making his preparations for this enterprise, he received a call for aid from Jamaica, which could have favored his southern views, and he at once despatched a fleet under Cornwallis. This expedition was, however, almost immediately recalled, as intelligence was received of D'Estaing's arrival off the coast

of Georgia. That New York would be the object of a combined attack was assumed from the start, and the garrison at Rhode Island was moved to New York to take the place of a detachment sent to Canada. On his part, Washington called upon the neighboring States for militia and supplies, and sent an express to bring Sullivan, as his adventure was at an end and had been entirely successful. Gates was directed to march toward New York as soon as he could learn that Newport had been abandoned — a place that he wished to hold, but which Washington saw could be of no value in the coming movements. At least twenty-five thousand men would be needed to reduce New York, and a larger number, should the Rhode Island garrison reach that place. To call out, equip, and support such a force would require great exertions, time, and money, and, unless the plan of co-operating with the French was certain to be adopted, would be unnecessary and even harmful. The French minister conferred with Washington, and hinted that the orders of D'Estaing might prevent his remaining on the coast for the time required to reduce New York, a hint that led Washington to fear the worst. He prudently continued to prepare for a combined movement, well knowing that to disappoint the Admiral would be more disastrous than to disappoint the States.

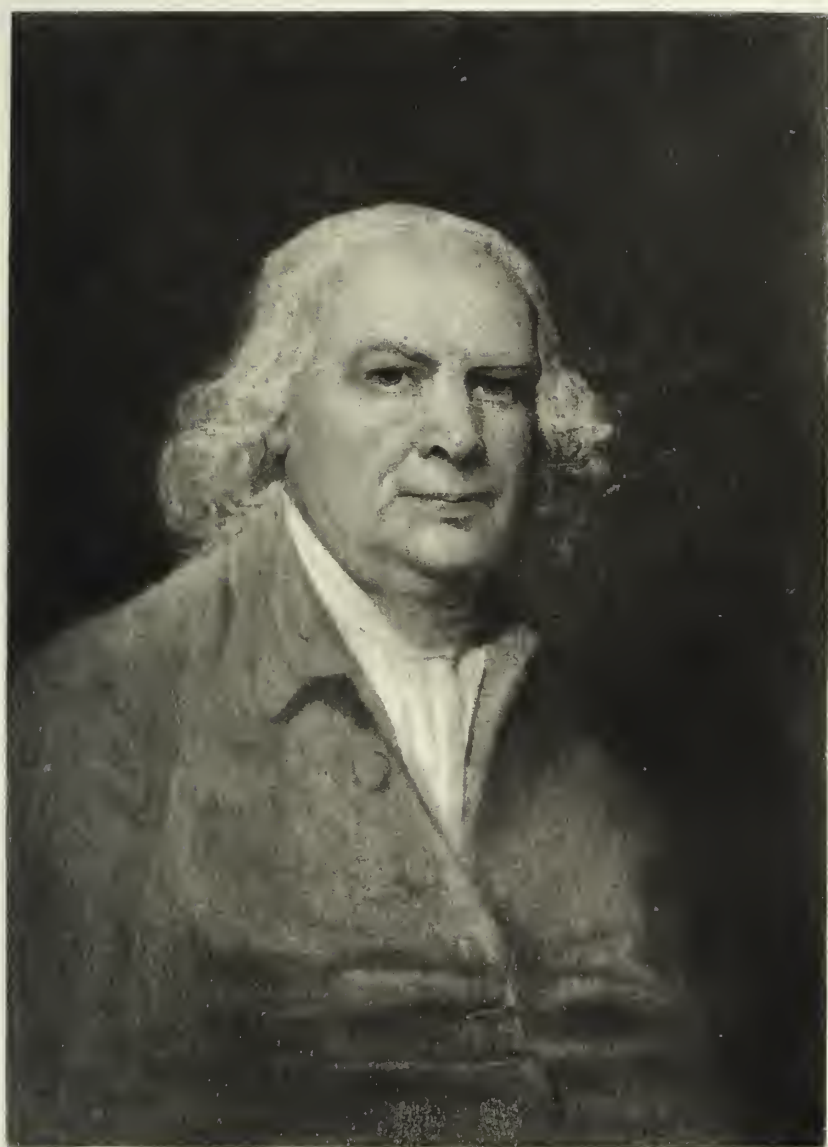
Weeks passed without any intelligence from the southward of fleet or its operations or intentions. The delay so long continued was favorable to the British, for they were able to concentrate their force and were active in fortifying and provisioning New York and the neighboring posts. All eyes were turned towards the

sea, anxiously awaiting the French fleet; but not a message of its position could be had, not even a rumor of its having sailed from Savannah. The situation of the American army was as awkward as it was costly; and the good resolutions of Congress to "stop the presses" and print no more paper money, were yielding under the incessant demands of every department. Matters were in this train on November 15th, when Washington realized that the season was so far advanced as almost to forbid the attack even should the French soon arrive before the harbor. "There seems to be the strangest fatality, and the most unaccountable silence attending the operations to the southward, that can be conceived, every measure in this quarter is hung in the most disagreeable state of suspense — and despair of doing anything, advanced as the season is, and uncertainty of the count's co-operating to any extent, if he should come, is succeeding fast to the flattering ideas we but lately possessed." He wrote to Congress asking if, under the circumstances, he would be justified in continuing the preparations. His force, so largely militia, was illy appointed and clad against a winter campaign. On the day after sending this letter, his doubts were solved. After a tedious investment of Savannah, an assault was made and proved unsuccessful. This put an end to all expectation of D'Estaing's coming to New York. The militia was discharged, and the army sent into winter quarters.

For the fourth time the problem of maintaining the army was presented, and Washington again urged his suggestion of an annual draft. Before the summer the different regiments would have melted away by the

Robert Morris.

By Gilbert Stuart, from the painting owned by C. F. M. Stark, Esq.,
North Dumbarton, N. H.



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expiration of their terms of service, and what would take their places? Convinced that the enemy would seek for laurels in the south, no new recruits could be expected from that quarter. As an embarkation was actually being made at New York, presumably to act against the southern States or to reinforce the West Indies, Washington determined to weaken his own force by sending to the Carolinas the regiments in his army from those States and Virginia. This was the utmost he could do, and could ill afford even this drain upon his strength.

To provide for the defense of these distant places was not the most pressing need of the hour. Under General Greene and Commissary-General Wadsworth the army had been better provided in comforts and necessaries than at any time since the winter of 1776. The continued depreciation of the money put it out of the power of these officers to make purchases. Rather than part with their commodities for paper whose value fluctuated from day to day, and was ever growing less, the owners refused to sell, and took their goods to markets where the returns were more certain. In the middle of December the full stress of this situation made itself felt, and rudely awakened Washington to a sense of danger. A few days of want in different supplies had occurred since October, warnings of coming disaster unless counteracted. He laid the case before Congress, and received no satisfaction, for that body was helpless. A crisis had now been reached. "I find our prospects [of food] are infinitely worse than they have been at any period of the war, and that unless some expedient can be instantly adopted a dissolution of the

army for want of subsistence is unavoidable. A part of it has been again several days without bread — and for the rest we have not either on the spot or within reach a supply sufficient for four days. Nor does this deficiency proceed from accidental obstructions, as has been the case on former occasions, but from the absolute emptiness of our magazines everywhere and the total want of money or credit to replenish them. I look forward to the consequences with an anxiety not to be described.”

In the first week of January he was obliged to appeal to the magistrates of New Jersey, as the troops and officers had been almost perishing of want for a fortnight. During that time they had been alternately without meat or bread, and on a very scant allowance when either was obtainable. The distress was driving them to plundering, and no punishment, however severe, could check the spread of these depredations. He would have each county called upon to supply its proportion of cattle and grain to tide over the emergency, and, in default of that, a military impress must be made. This measure of last resort, cruel under the best of conditions, could not be depended upon as a permanent source of supplies. The States must exert themselves to establish magazines and concert measures for supplying the army. The want of provisions prevented any movement of the army ; yet, at this time, the prospect was fair of making a venture against the British on Staten Island the ice giving a means of approach and safe retreat. The attempt was made, and failed ; but the army was supplied, and without a resort to force.

It is from Washington's own situation that some

idea may be gained of the absence of comfort. Writing on January 22d to General Greene he describes his wants. "I have been at my present quarters since the 1st day of December, and have not a kitchen to cook a dinner in, altho' the logs have been put together some considerable time by my own guard. Nor is there a place at this moment in which a servant can lodge, with the smallest degree of comfort. Eighteen belonging to my family, and all Mrs. Ford's, are crowded together in her kitchen, and scarce one of them able to speak for the colds they have caught."

The winter passed without event. Two sorties by the British on New Jersey were successful and mortified the General by their proof of careless ease on the part of the American outposts. Some mention was made of a Canadian expedition, of one to the Natches, and an attempt on Niagara and St. John's, in conjunction with the friendly Indians. Relatively the position of the two armies had not changed. Clinton still looked for an adequate reinforcement; while Washington could look for little unless some extraordinary reforms could be introduced. When Steuben asked him about the coming campaign, his reply was too vague to give room for much hope. With vigorous exertions a sufficient number of men might be raised for offensive operations, but they could not be maintained without some assistance from abroad, such was the state of the Continental finances. If a foreign aid of money and a naval force could be depended upon, a decisive campaign would be prosecuted. Of the likelihood of this assistance, Congress alone had information. The operations in the field were no longer so interesting as the manœuvres in

the Cabinet. With France and Spain combined against Great Britain, and Ireland on the eve of a rebellion, as was thought, Europe became the centre of interest.

No longer manufacturing "money," Congress looked to the States for supplies, and in place of asking for money, devised a plan of requiring "specifics," under which each State was desired to furnish specific quantities of flour, meat, hay, and other articles. These were to be collected and deposited at some place designated by the General of the army, but at no particular time. Being only a requisition from Congress, no penalty could be imposed for not complying with it, while the long distance of some States from the army made the transportation costly and difficult. The plan proved to be full of defects, but marked the great change that had taken place in the position of Congress. "They can neither enlist, pay nor feed a single soldier, nor execute any other purpose, but as the means are first put into their hands. Unless the legislatures are sufficiently attentive to this change of circumstances, and act in conformity to it, every thing must necessarily go wrong, or rather must come to a total stop."

In practice the system developed the already existing discontent. After a trial of some weeks Washington told Congress of his anxieties. "There never has been a stage of the war, in which the dissatisfaction has been so general or alarming. It has lately, in particular instances, worn features of a very dangerous complexion. A variety of causes has contributed to this; the diversity in the terms of enlistments, the inequality of the rewards given for entering into the service, but still more the disparity in the provision made by the several

States for their respective troops. The system of State supplies, however in the commencement dictated by necessity, has proved in its operation pernicious beyond description. Some States, from their internal ability and local advantages, furnish their troops pretty amply, not only with cloathing, but with many little comforts and conveniences ; others supply them with some necessities, but on a more contracted scale ; while others have it in their power to do little or nothing at all. The officers and men in the routine of duty mix daily and compare circumstances. Those, who fare worse than others, of course are dissatisfied, and have their resentment excited, not only against their own State, but against the Confederacy. The officers resign, and we have now scarcely a sufficient number left to take care even of the fragments of corps which remain. The men have not this resource. They murmur, brood over their discontents, and have lately shown a disposition to enter into seditious combinations."

The great departments of the army were in confusion, and a committee of Congress, appointed after much debate, in which the strong jealousy of the army was shown, proceeded to camp to introduce system and order. The Articles of Confederation, a formal step toward united councils, but lacking in effective initiative, were signed and submitted to the States. This act did not influence the situation of Washington, for it supplied neither men nor money.

In December Sir Henry Clinton and Cornwallis went on board the fleet with about eight thousand men, and sailed for Savannah. Storms did much damage to them ere they arrived, and on landing such troops as

survived, word was sent to New York for a reinforcement. By April Washington knew with certainty of this move. While he felt unable to send further assistance to the south, as his total strength was less than that left in New York, he placed some regiments under marching orders, leaving to Congress a decision whether they should go or remain. Charleston was the object of this expedition of the British, and its defense fell to General Lincoln, a man of only fair ability.

The return of Lafayette from France brought good news, for a French fleet and army under Rochambeau were to be sent to co-operate with Washington. This intelligence was intended to be given to the General, and not to Congress, a circumstance which proved how much more confidence was placed by the French ministry in him than in the representative body. The English learned of the foreign aid to the States, and gave out the intelligence from New York. Even this fair prospect opened before them could not inspire Congress with the energy needed to complete the army, to lay up magazines, and to concert a plan which would bring out the resources of the country with vigor and decision. A committee of that body, to reside near headquarters, was suggested by Washington, who outlined its functions. It should be vested "with all the powers which Congress have, so far as respects the purpose of a full co-operation with the French fleet and army on the continent. Their authority should be plenary to draw out men and supplies of every kind, and to give their sanction to any operations which the Commander-in-chief may not think himself at liberty to undertake without it, as well beyond as within the

limits of these States." Secrecy, despatch, and energy would be gained, and all these qualities would be lost were Congress to be told of its sessions, and the approval of that body be required for its recommendations. Washington, individually, could accomplish more than such an advisory and halting assembly.

What dependence could be placed upon the Continent's performing its due share of the combination? The provisions for the new army called for an effective force of only eighteen thousand men, when twenty thousand was the lowest figure needed. The men now in service had not received any pay for five months, and their temper was shown by an open mutiny among the Connecticut regiments, which was suppressed only with difficulty by the judicious behavior of their officers. Meat was still a rare article, and often only a fourth or an eighth part of the proper allowance could be distributed. Present sufferings required immediate relief, but no relief could be offered. The only means of payment was Continental bills, and an immense sum would be required to satisfy the just dues of the men. The British, who were well acquainted with the affairs of Washington's army, distributed a paper dwelling upon the privation and injustice. "You are neither clothed, fed nor paid; your numbers are wasting away by sickness, famine, nakedness." This then was the moment to "fly from slavery and fraud," and to join their real friends, who would forgive all errors. Sending a copy to Congress, Washington could say it was having considerable effect among the privates. To Reed he pictured the desperate condition, which must soon be beyond the possibility of recovery unless some change

of system was made. "We have almost ceased to hope. The country in general is in such a state of insensibility and indifference to its interest, that I dare not flatter myself with any change for the better." How could the French be expected to labor and sacrifice for a cause to establish which the Americans appeared to want inclination or ability even to assist?

Already favorable conditions had been wasted. The English were powerful at sea, and their fleet was equal to that of France and Spain combined. A defeat in a naval engagement of France or Spain would give the British the supremacy of the sea, and enable them once more to command the whole coast of America. What France had done with her navy was a violent and unnatural effort of the Government, and a repetition or continued progress could not be expected. A second very important matter was sometimes overlooked. "In modern wars, the longest purse must chiefly determine the event." England was a very rich nation, and her public credit such that she could make a greater exertion than any other nation. "Speculatists have been a long time foretelling its downfall; but we see no symptoms of the catastrophe being very near. I am persuaded that it will at least last out the war." France, on the other hand, was making war on ruinous terms, which could not be long continued. It followed that a great effort should be made to secure peace in this campaign.

From June until November this large force would be required, a force capable of performing the most difficult task, — the capture of New York, with the British army united. A general assertion that the quotas

were to be had would not be sufficient ; the States must pledge themselves specifically to supply men and provisions. The committee at camp issued an appeal to the States, and Washington followed it with a circular letter. The demands were large, but the object was also large. Congress could do nothing, and Washington, giving expression to the belief in a firmer union, noted the symptoms of decay and suggested a remedy. "I see one head gradually changing into thirteen. I see one army branching into thirteen, which, instead of looking up to Congress as the supreme controlling power of the United States, are considering themselves as dependent on their respective States. In a word, I see the powers of Congress declining too fast for the consideration and respect which are due to them as the great representative body of America, and I am fearful of the result." The remedy was plain. "Certain I am, unless Congress speak in a more decisive tone, unless they are vested with powers by the several States competent to the great purposes of war, or assume them as matter of right, and they and the States respectively act with more energy than they hitherto have done, that our cause is lost. We can no longer drudge on in the old way. By ill timing the adoption of measures, by delays in the execution of them, or by unwarrantable jealousies, we incur enormous expenses and derive no benefit from them. One State will comply with a requisition of Congress ; another neglects to do it ; a third executes it by halves ; and all differ either in the manner, the matter, or so much in point of time, that we are always working up hill, and ever shall be ; and, while such a system as the present one or rather want of one prevails, we shall

ever be unable to apply our strength or resources to any advantage."

On May 12th, Charleston capitulated. The intelligence travelled slowly north, and when it reached Washington he knew that Sir Henry Clinton might be soon expected at New York. On the 18th of June, General Forman could send word that the southern fleet of the English was off the harbor, and yet not a step had been taken to prepare the best welcome that could be given to the French, — an army of size in the field, and a plan of co-operation. Were the allies to arrive, Washington wrote, "I should find myself in the most awkward, embarrassing, and painful situation." He was ignorant of the intentions of the States, and was troubled over the safety of West Point. The garrison at Fort Schuyler were so discontented as to be on the verge of mutiny, and it was from collections of money received by women in some States that his army must receive such necessary articles as shirts and hospital stores. Temporary and partial expedients were the rule of the day, and the great questions were slighted or a determination postponed. "I scruple not to confess," was a confidence from Washington made to Governor Clinton, "that the prevailing politics for a considerable time past have filled me with inexpressible anxiety and apprehension, and have uniformly appeared to me to threaten the subversion of our independence." Congress was again divided into parties, and the southern members felt their interests were sacrificed to those of the north. The British were successful in strengthening this jealousy, and even proposed to form a southern confederacy, the three States south of Virginia to

be joined in a government with East Florida and the Bahama Islands.

Want of system, absence of foresight, jealousy of a standing army — each of these influences had contributed its share to bringing the army to its present pass, uncertain in numbers, fed by spasmodic supplies, and clothed as opportunities permitted. The business of Congress was attempted rather than done, and its timid pleadings and requisitions were passed upon by the States as each found its interest. The contest among the States was not which should do the most for the common cause, but which should do least; and the result was failure to provide what was so urgently needed. On July 10th, the French fleet was signalled off Newport, and entered the harbor the next day. Two days later Admiral Graves reached New York with his fleet, and gave the British a naval force superior to that of the French. If that continued to exist, the question of transporting men and supplies for an attempt upon New York became a serious question.

Sir Henry Clinton conceived it possible to blockade and even destroy the French fleet at Rhode Island, and sailed with a large detachment to accomplish one of these objects. Washington saw his opportunity and moved with his army towards New York, compelling the British to return for its defense.

The middle of August came, and if any operation was to be undertaken it must be begun by the middle of September at the latest. Washington estimated his strength and was discouraged. "Our prospects of operating diminish in proportion as the effects of our applications to the respective States unfold, and I am

sorry to add that we have every reason to apprehend we shall not be in a condition at all to undertake anything decisive." The number of men received from the States was a little more than six thousand; but the deficiencies in the battalions were more than ten thousand, leaving the army, after necessary deductions had been made, of a size incompetent for any capital enterprise against the enemy, and barely sufficient for defense. As to the militia, it was doubtful whether the deficiencies would not be even greater. The men were coming in very slowly, in decreasing numbers, and it seemed as if the army had gained all that could be expected.

Men were only a part of what was needed. Greene had resigned the position of Quartermaster-general, a place which he had filled with honor to himself and with satisfaction to the army. His successor was Timothy Pickering, who found difficulties at the start, and especially as to hay and transportation, indispensable for a moving army. Military impress was the method of obtaining them, and so violent, unequal, and oppressive was its exercise, that it could not be long practised with success. The army was fed from day to day, and the commissary could not give assurances of a continuance of that precarious supply. The system of specific supplies proved the most uncertain, costly, and injurious that could be devised. Not knowing what to expect, no plans for future execution could be made. Greene was sent out to forage for provisions, and was so shocked by the license of the soldiers and their readiness to plunder, that he made an example, and executed one of those caught in the act. After stripping the lower

country of cattle in this forage, only two or three days' supply was obtained, and they were composed chiefly of milch cows and calves. Military coercion could no longer be of avail, and besides was conducive to enormous excesses, destructive of the morals and discipline of the army. Once more the States north of Virginia were appealed to, and solemnly warned of the dangers of refusing supplies.

The operations against New York required a certain naval superiority for their success, and only one division of the French fleet had yet reached the coast. The second part was blockaded in the harbor of Brest. Concluding that no immediate movement could be made, Washington acceded to a wish of Rochambeau and De Ternay for a conference at Hartford, and discharged such of the militia as had only a short time to serve. "The flattering prospect which seemed to be opened to our view in the month of May, is vanishing like the morning dew. The States, instead of sending the full number of men required of them by the first of July, and the consignment of supplies, have not furnished one half of them yet. And the second division of French troops and their ships not being arrived, nor any certainty when they will, I despair of doing anything in this quarter this campaign — and what may be the consequence if the combined arms of France and Spain are not more prosperous in Europe or the West Indies, I shall leave to others to predict. At best, the troops we have are only fed from hand to mouth — and for the last four or five days have been without meat. In short, the limits of a letter would convey very inadequate ideas of our disagreeable situation; and the

wretched manner in which our business is being conducted." This was written on the last day of August. On September 5th Washington learned officially of the defeat of Gates at Camden, and on the following day a council of war decided against any attempt on New York.

In his correspondence with Congress, whether through the committee of co-operation sent from that body to camp, or direct, Washington insisted upon one point : it could not be for the honor of the States to enter into engagements which he had no assurance they were able to fulfil to the uttermost. He did not know what measures had been taken to replace the army, half of which would retire in the coming four months ; and in default of that knowledge what plans could he submit to the French General and Admiral in their conference ? Only possibilities could be discussed, and yet activity was the one thing needed to give tone to the situation. Charged as he was with the entire policy of the campaign, whether to be conducted in Canada, in the States, or in the West Indies, he took upon himself to write to the Comte de Guichen, then in command of a French fleet acting against the British West Indies, asking for aid. In the account given of the need of his assistance not a detail was softened, not an embarrassment exaggerated, and not a shadow of self-interest was introduced. It was the candor and balance of Washington that made such an impression on the ministers of France in America, and the very boldness of picturing to a possible ally the critical situation of America, carried the weight of conviction and expressed the perfect sincerity of the man. De Ternay added his entreaties, for other

reasons ; but when the letters, turned into cipher by the French minister, reached the fleet in the West Indies, Guichen had returned to Europe, and his successor was unable to read them.

Warning Congress against continuing the policy of raising large bodies of militia in the southern States, one of the disastrous results of which had just been experienced at Camden, and intimating that extensive magazines should be collected in the Carolinas and Virginia, for possible operations in those States, Washington turned the army over to Greene, and set out for Hartford. Lafayette and Knox accompanied him. Arnold, at West Point, was directed to send to Peekskill a guard and a night's forage for forty horses, and came in person to meet his chief. At Hartford the commanders of the two armies and the French navy considered the prospects from every point of view, and decided that the capture of New York was the great object to be attained, and to do that a larger force in men, ships, and money was demanded. A superiority over the British both on land and sea was indispensable. This put an end to all prospect of any decisive movement that season.

An extraordinary activity had been shown in another direction. Arnold, when in command at Philadelphia, had incurred the hostility of the State executive, and grave charges of peculation had been preferred against him. Sensitive to reproach, he had smarted under the persecution that followed, and, dissatisfied with the command in the field offered by Washington, had expressed a wish to be placed over West Point. He could not only plead his wounds, which were troubling him, but

point to strong endorsements from leaders in New York. The place was given to him, and he at once entered into negotiations for giving the post to the British. Of all the stories of the Revolution, this treason of Arnold is the best known, destroying, as it did, a brilliant reputation, and cutting short the career of an amiable officer, whose romantic end is made the more striking by the black ingratitude of his fellow-plotter. Returning from his conference and while viewing some of the works with Lafayette, Washington learned of the capture of André and the flight of Arnold. Without delay he took all necessary precautions to safeguard West Point, ordering up a division from the main army, but without giving to Greene the reason. "Transactions of a most interesting nature, and such as will astonish you, have just been discovered." Hamilton, sent to Verplanck's Point to intercept Arnold, if possible, found that he had reached the *Vulture*, and was safe among his new friends.

In his letter to Congress Washington gave a full detail of what had occurred, but not a word of comment or denunciation is contained in it. The aim of Arnold to betray the fort is developed, but the despatch is a formal relation of fact, and nothing more. To Rochambeau was shown a greater display of feeling: "On my arrival here a very disagreeable scene unfolded itself. By lucky accident, a conspiracy of the most dangerous nature, the object of which was to sacrifice this post, has been detected. General Arnold, who has sullied his former glory by the blackest treason, has escaped to the enemy. This is an event that occasions me equal regret and mortification ; but traitors are

the growth of every country, and in a revolution of the present nature, it is more to be wondered at, that the catalogue is so small, than that there have been found a few." Protecting André from insult, and treating him with civility, Washington was inexorable in exacting the penalty due from a spy, and refused to permit him to be shot. "The circumstances he was taken in justified it, and policy required a sacrifice; but as he was more unfortunate than criminal in the affair, and, as there was much in his character to interest, while we yielded to the necessity of rigor, we could not but lament it." Only at a later day did he turn against Arnold. "I am mistaken if, at this time, 'Arnold is undergoing the torment of a mental Hell' [a suggestion of John Laurens]. He wants feeling. From some traits of his character, which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hackneyed in villainy, and so lost to all sense of honor and shame, that, while his faculties will enable him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse."

Untaught by experience and with little regard to the frequent warnings from the generals, Congress proposed to enlist men for a year. In the most solemn terms Washington had urged a draft for the war or for three years, adding that a shorter period than one year was inadmissible. A permanent army was needed, and no temporary one could be sufficient. To offer anything else was to invite destruction. However agreeable the conference at Hartford had been, only possible plans on the supposition of possible events could be submitted, and neither side knew with certainty what was to be expected. To do all in its power was a pledge that meant

little so far as concerned Congress, for it lacked all power save that of recommending measures to the States. An alteration was indicated. "I am convinced," Washington wrote to James Duane, "it is essential to our safety, that Congress should have an *efficient* power. The want of it must ruin us. The satisfaction I have in any successes that attend us, even in the alleviation of misfortunes, is always allayed by a fear that it will lull us into security. Supineness and a disposition to flatter ourselves seem to make parts of our national character. When we receive a check, and are not quite undone, we are apt to fancy we have gained a victory; and, when we do gain any little advantage, we imagine it decisive and expect the war is immediately to end. The history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary expedients. Would to God they were to end here!"



CHAPTER III

YORKTOWN



ON October 18th, Washington addressed an appeal to the States. The single object was to again protest against short enlistments and a dependence upon militia, which had done so much mischief in the past and could only point to ruin in the future. "America has been almost amused out of her liberties. We have frequently heard the behavior of the militia extolled upon one and another occasion, by men who judge only from the surface, by men who had particular views in misrepresenting, by visionary men whose credulity easily swallowed every vague story in support of a favorite hypothesis. I solemnly declare, I never was witness to a single instance that can countenance an opinion of militia or raw troops being fit for the real business of fighting." Every motive called for the abandoning of temporary expedients, and creating a civil administration and a military establishment that should be durable, systematic, and substantial. More energy to government, more vigor and satisfaction to the army—without these everything was to be feared.

Properly directed, there was a sufficiency of resources, but a spirit of exertion must be aroused.

Congress had done some things to further an improvement, for it had recommended an army for the war and wished to place the officers upon an honorable establishment. The decision, had it been made four or even three years earlier, would have saved endless suffering and expense. As it was, the call for provisions was issued too late to take advantage of the season for salting meats. "The multiplicity of business," Washington wrote to General Sullivan, now in Congress, "in which Congress are engaged, will not let them extend that seasonable and provident care to many matters, which private convenience and public economy indispensably call for, and proves, in my opinion, the evident necessity of committing more of the executive business to small boards or responsible characters, than is practised at present." He would go much farther and give Congress greater powers, but conditioned on a better employment of them. "If individual States," was his advice to Duane, "conceive themselves at liberty to reject, or alter any act of Congress, which in a full representation of them has been solemnly debated, and decided on ; it will be madness in us, to think of prosecuting the war. And if Congress suppose that Boards composed of their own body, and always fluctuating, are competent to the great business of war (which requires not only close application, but a constant and uniform train of thinking and acting), they will most assuredly deceive themselves."

One hope remained, carefully nursed through many weeks. A blow at New York was always a possibility,

and as detachments went to the south, replaced in part by new troops from England, a careful watch was kept for an opportunity to strike. At the conference at Hartford, Washington urged that the French vessels be sent to Boston, where they would be safe, and the French troops be brought near New York, where the presence of so large a force would deter Clinton from pursuing his southern plans. The plan was rejected; yet Washington made elaborate preparations for acting alone, and with every promise of success on more occasions than one. In spite of the greatest care, the actual performance was always prevented by the means being inadequate to the end. The want of money or credit checked every attempt to move. No express could be sent, and for two months not a dollar of the public money had been obtainable for supporting the table of the General. At the end of November, when the army went into its winter cantonments, it was with difficulty that the regiments could be sent to their respective places, "where it would be well for the troops if, like chameleons, they could live upon air, or, like the bear, suck their paws for sustenance during the rigor of the approaching winter." With such grim thoughts, Washington fixed his headquarters at New Windsor and explained why he did not attack New York, as many thought he should do. The French wintered at Newport.

Although Clinton had returned to New York after the fall of Charleston, Lord Cornwallis remained with a large force in the Carolinas. Knowing the reputation that would follow a complete subjugation of the southern States, Clinton sent General Leslie, with a detachment,

to the Chesapeake, to establish a post on Elizabeth River, convenient for moving to the aid of Cornwallis, should he need it, or to act against Virginia, should an opportunity offer. Many in Congress thought that Washington should send a part of his army to the south, and many believed he should come in person. As either of these measures was not to be thought of in the face of a possibility of ousting the enemy from New York, Congress asked Washington to name a successor to Gates. The selection fell upon Major-General Greene, than whom a happier choice could not have been made. The loss of the forts on the North River in 1776 had for a time clouded his reputation; but his great military skill and high qualities of mind had more than overcome the temporary prejudice. As a counsellor of Washington, he had gained the enmity of the Conway cabal; as Quartermaster-general, he had proved resourceful and energetic, dealing with the difficulties of the position with judgment and marked success; and he had come to be recognized as the man who should succeed to the command should anything deprive the army of Washington. Steuben was sent with him, as the southern army was to be newly formed, and Major Henry Lee's corps of light horse was ordered to join him.

A foreign loan was indispensable, and Washington sought to impress this fact upon the French minister as well as upon Congress. "Congress will deceive themselves," he said, "if they imagine that the army, or a State that is the theatre of war, can rub through a second campaign as the last. It would be as reasonable as to suppose, that, because a man had rolled a

snowball till it had acquired the size of a horse, that he might do so till it was as large as a house. Matters may be pushed to a certain point, beyond which we cannot move them." The son of Rochambeau was sent home with a statement of what was needed in men, ships, and money, and, at the end of December, John Laurens was appointed by Congress to go to France to solicit succors for the next campaign. As if to emphasize the necessity by proving that discontent was at high pitch, the Pennsylvania line at Morristown mutinied, shot down some of its officers, and marched towards Philadelphia to demand a redress of grievances.

Washington recognized the importance of the crisis. Opposing the march of the men could not check the mutiny, and would in all probability drive them in a body to the enemy. He would have Wayne follow them, draw out their grievances, bring them to a negotiation, and promise a full representation to Congress and the State. He sent Knox to the New England States to obtain from them at least three months' pay for the army, and means to clothe and feed it more regularly. This measure was extraordinary, for he had no power to make requisitions on individual States without authority from Congress; yet the stretch of power was fully justified by the evil to be overcome. The whole army was keenly conscious of its distress, and must be satisfied, or its discipline and loyalty could not be assured. When the New Jersey men also mutinied, Washington ordered out a detachment, who surrounded the mutineers, awed them into an unconditional surrender, and executed two of the principal actors on the spot. Lenity in such a case would

have been misplaced ; but having punished guilt and supported authority, Washington now pleaded for justice to the soldiers.

Believing that the country was exhausted by the war, Washington saw safety only in immediate aid from abroad. No merely interior exertions could restore public credit and furnish the funds needed to support the war. Taxes could not be collected, and the demands for supplies were regarded by the people as oppressive, giving rise to alarming symptoms of opposition. No success had attended the efforts to draw money from the States, and the mode of obtaining supplies had proved so inadequate as to be ineligible save as an auxiliary. Beyond the attainable was a vast range of wants for which public credit was essential, but public credit was hopelessly impaired, and private credit would not come to the aid of the cause. Above all, "the people being dissatisfied with the mode of supporting the war, there is cause to apprehend, that evils actually felt in the prosecution may weaken those sentiments which began it, founded, not on immediate sufferings, but on a speculative apprehension of future sufferings from the loss of their liberties. There is danger, that a commercial and free people, little accustomed to heavy burthens, pressed by impositions of a new and odious kind, may not make a proper allowance for the necessity of the conjuncture, and may imagine they have only exchanged one tyranny for another."

The remedy was an aid in money sufficient to revive public credit and give vigor to future operations. Unless this grant was made "we may make a feeble and expiring effort the next campaign, in all probability the

Thomas Jefferson.

From the painting by Gilbert Stuart at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me.



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period of our opposition." By the side of a reinforcement of men, money was of far greater importance. It would stop the progress of disgust, call out the resources of the country, and instil energy and activity into public measures. "The people are discontented; but it is with the feeble and oppressive mode of conducting the war, not with the war itself. They are not unwilling to contribute to its support, but they are unwilling to do it in a way that renders private property precarious; a necessary consequence of the fluctuation of the national currency, and of the inability of government to perform its engagements oftentimes coercively made. A large majority are still firmly attached to the independence of these States, abhor a reunion with Great Britain, and are affectionate to the alliance with France; but this disposition cannot supply the place of means customary and essential in war, nor can we rely on its duration amidst the perplexities, oppressions, and misfortunes, that attend the want of them."

Congress created executive offices, thus removing one of the great obstacles to careful regard for the details of executive work. In the appointments to the War and Finance departments Washington was naturally interested, for so much of his anxieties would be relieved by good men in those places. "I have no doubt of our abilities or resources, but we must not slumber nor sleep; they never will be drawn forth if we do; nor will violent exertions, which subside with the occasion, answer our purposes. It is a provident foresight, a proper arrangement of business, system and order in the execution, that is to be productive of that economy, which is to defeat the efforts and hopes of

Great Britain." Schuyler was prominently spoken of for the department of war, a selection which would have been as grateful to Washington as it was deserved. Washington pressed him to accept, should the office be offered, saying, "The greater the chaos, the greater will be your merit in bringing forth order—and to expect to tread the different walks of public life without envy and its concomitants, is more than has yet fallen to the lot of human kind." Schuyler had already informed Congress he would hold no office in its gift unless his military rank was restored, and he was now met by this condition. A stronger influence prevailed. Though it was now March, it was determined that no appointment should be made till October. The friends of Gates wished to give him the place, and saw the necessity of postponing the act till he had been exonerated by the court appointed to inquire into his conduct at Camden.

For the management of the finances Robert Morris was named after a long delay, with only two dissenting votes, both in the delegation from Massachusetts. Of his fitness and knowledge there was no doubt expressed; but the survival of faction, based upon troubles among the American representatives in France, looked upon him as one who had used his public position to benefit his private fortune. A successful merchant, conducting his operations upon a scale large for those days, his connections in various ports of the West Indies and Europe, gave him a standing and credit that made him highly useful to Congress. Serving on the Secret and Commercial committees in the early sessions, he had engaged in the importation of arms and war supplies

and exported in payment flour and tobacco, using his own name and means to further the transactions. The services he rendered to the cause were great, and his direct and thorough business methods had early made him known to Washington, and soon won him a confidence which was never abused. Had Morris been entrusted with the management of the finances from the beginning of the war, the States would not now be begging for a foreign aid in money, and Washington need not have asked for enough cash to pay for an express. As it was, the enemy, paying specie, could obtain everything they wanted, while Washington at times was unable even to fill his own table.

Executive departments constituted only one branch of the necessary reform. Back of them must be a Congress with something more than a recommendatory power. It was not possible in time of war that business could be conducted well without it. He lost no opportunity of conveying his ideas on this subject. The fear of giving competent powers to Congress was futile. "Without it our independence fails and each Assembly, under its present constitution, will be annihilated, and we must once more return to the Government of Great Britain, and be made to kiss the rod preparing for our correction. A nominal head, which at present is but another name for Congress, will no longer do. That honorable body, after hearing the interests and views of the several States fairly discussed and explained by their respective representatives, must dictate, and not merely recommend and leave it to the States afterwards to do as they please, which, as I have observed before, is in many cases to do nothing at all."

A military project now engaged the thoughts of Washington. The English fleet blockading the French vessels at Newport had suffered so much damage by a storm as to suggest to the French Admiral, the Chevalier Destouches, the possibility of sending some of his vessels to the Chesapeake to check, perhaps capture, Arnold. Washington saw at once that a land force would be essential to such an operation, and suggested that the entire French fleet, with Rochambeau's army, go on the expedition; and before hearing from the French commanders, he put a detachment of twelve hundred of his own army under marching orders, for the Head of Elk, there to embark and join the French force. Arnold's force was about fifteen hundred, so, even if entrenched, it was thought he would fall an easy prey to the combined forces and the local militia. The capture of this man and the destruction of the corps under his command were looked upon as events greatly to be desired, and Washington determined to undertake them even without any aid from Rochambeau, if he could be assured of protection from the fleet. Unfortunately, this well conceived plan came to nought, as the letter reached Newport too late, a part of the French fleet, under M. de Tilly, having already sailed for the Chesapeake. The venture resulted in some prizes, but the main object, the defeat of Arnold, was not accomplished. He had been warned of the approach of the French vessels.

Before learning of the result of Tilly's movement, Washington gave to Lafayette the command of the detachment for the south, with express orders to allow nothing to delay his march. If provisions, wagons, or

forage on the route could not be obtained by ordinary methods, military impress must be applied. Having reached Virginia he was to act with Steuben, then forming the militia of that State, and concert operations with the French vessels. "You are to do no act whatever with Arnold," ran the instructions, "that directly or by implication may screen him from the punishment due to his treason and desertion, which, if he should fall into your hands, you will execute in the most summary way." This was all the more significant, as only four months before, when planning with Major Henry Lee to capture Arnold, Washington had expressly stipulated that Arnold should be brought to him alive. "No circumstance whatever shall obtain my consent to his being put to death. The idea which would accompany such an event would be that ruffians had been hired to assassinate him. My aim is to make a public example of him."

The southern expedition became more complicated. On Tilly's return to Newport it was decided to send the whole fleet to Virginia in accordance with Washington's plan. A conference was held between the French and the American commanders at Newport at which all the contingencies were displayed and provision made to meet them. The fleet sailed, and Sir Henry Clinton, soon learning of it and conjecturing its destination, sent a reinforcement for Arnold, under General Phillips, the whole to act on the plans of Cornwallis, now pursuing and now retreating before Greene in the Carolinas. The British scheme was to complete the conquest of the southern States, and then to move northward, subduing each State in order, and by

commanding the Delaware, deprive the Continental cause of its best sources of assistance. Before that end could be secured the Carolinas must be made British territory, and no hold on the Carolinas could be secure without Virginia. For this reason Cornwallis foresaw that the Chesapeake would probably become the seat of war, even, if necessary, at the expense of abandoning New York. Washington also saw the coming military importance of that region, and hoped that Lafayette could intercept Cornwallis, and so aid Greene to maintain the Carolinas.

This sailing of the French fleet occurred in March, and was looked upon as a bold move, as the naval strength of the contestants was so nearly equal. It was with little surprise that he learned of an engagement between the two fleets, in which the English suffered the more, but pursued their way to the Chesapeake, while Destouches returned to Newport. For political reasons, Washington wished Congress to pay the French Admiral a compliment on the occasion; but he was obliged to admit that the event, however glorious for the French, was unprofitable to the Americans, as it disappointed them of the fruits of the expedition. "The world are disappointed," he wrote to Laurens, "at not seeing Arnold in jibbets."

Rochambeau now offered to march all his force, except twelve hundred men, to Washington's camp, but was dissuaded by Washington on the plea that a combination was not essential until an operation against New York had been determined upon, or until so large a part of the American army had been detached to the south as to make a larger force near New York and on

the Hudson expedient. The old perplexities were beginning to appear. It was now the first week in April, and the new establishment of the army was still in an inchoate form. No definite plan of a campaign could be set forth, and it was even impossible to carry into effect the objects already held in contemplation. "Our future operations depend upon contingencies, and our determinations must be the result of the moment, dependent upon circumstances." In reality they depended more upon the success of Laurens' mission than upon any efforts of the States, for without a loan of money from France, the army could not be kept in the field. Provisions could not be brought to the army, because of the expense; the troops were fast approaching to nakedness, and the hospitals were without medicines; the public works were at a stand. "It may be declared in a word, that we are at the end of our tether, and that now or never our deliverance must come."

The course of events pointed more clearly to a southern campaign. Situated as he was, Washington could make no further detachments unless he accompanied them, for a single brigade sent away would leave him almost without a command. He began to throw out hints of his coming. Cornwallis had chased Greene into Virginia and turning back offered a fair opportunity for the Americans to press upon him. To hold Phillips in check in Virginia was the task set for Lafayette, now on his way to that State, and the interest of action was now centred upon that movement.

To his surprise he heard that the overseer and manager of his estates had visited the ships of a plundering party of the British and furnished them with refresh-

ments. The excuse offered was that the party would otherwise have burnt the mansion at Mount Vernon and laid the plantations in ruins. "You ought to have considered yourself as my representative," Washington wrote with some indignation, "and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them with a view to prevent a conflagration. . . . To go on board their vessels, carry them refreshments, commune with a parcel of plundering scoundrels, and request a favor by asking a surrender of my negroes, was exceedingly ill judged, and, 't is to be feared, will be unhappy in its consequences, as it will be a precedent for others, and may become a subject of animadversion." Better the loss of all his negroes and destruction of his buildings, than to give the least countenance to the enemy.

Young Rochambeau returned from France in May bringing despatches which called for a conference between the French and American generals. This meeting took place at the Webb house, in Wethersfield, Connecticut, where Washington remained four days. Rochambeau alone attended, as the appearance of the British fleet off Block Island detained the French Admiral, Count de Barras. The conclusion reached was that the French fleet should go to Boston, and the French army march to the Hudson River to make an attempt upon New York. The season, the difficulty and expense of land transportation, the continual waste of men in reinforcing the southern force, and the want of a naval superiority were regarded as insuperable obstacles to transferring the entire armies to Virginia. New York

was the goal, and only in the event of a naval reinforcement to the French from the West Indies could another operation be considered. It was believed that a concentration of force around New York would either oblige Sir Henry Clinton to recall some of the detachments from the south, or run the risk of losing New York, with all its important stores. Should the city be evacuated, and Clinton take his whole force to the southern States, it would then be necessary for Washington to follow, at every risk and hazard.

The English having sent a detachment into New Jersey to collect horses, cattle, and other plunder, Washington determined to strike at New York, and wrote to Rochambeau to press his march so as to be ready to co-operate in an attack on the night of July 2d. The most careful and elaborate plans were made, and with a station for each corps it was essential that exact combinations should be effected, or the plan would fail. This is what did happen. The main French army could not reach the stations assigned to it in time, and the only results of the scheme were an opportunity to reconnoitre, and the complete junction of the French and American forces on the 6th. The French minister also came to camp, and a free interchange of opinion was had. Nothing could be done but to await the reinforcement from the States, men who should have been with the army from the opening of the year. In the middle of July Washington could say, "not half the men which were required to be with the army, as recruits for the Continental battalions, by the first day of January last, are yet arrived; and of those asked by me from the militia not one is come." Pressed for a definitive plan by

Rochambeau, who daily looked for the arrival of the Count De Grasse, Washington still insisted upon New York as the primary object, and looked upon a Virginia campaign as a contingency.

Thus much depended upon the naval situation, and there was some difference of opinion on the movements of the ships. Washington wished Barras to move his fleet from Newport to the Chesapeake, for that would block the return of any part of Cornwallis' force to New York. The French Admiral at first agreed, but later altered his mind, on the ground that such a move might contravene the general plans of operations and prevent a junction with the West Indian fleet. Finding him fixed in his determination, Washington ceased to urge it, "lest in the attempt any disaster should happen, and the loss of or damage to his fleet should be ascribed to my obstinacy in urging a measure, to which his own judgment was opposed." Yet in the event of an operation against New York being declined, the Virginia field must be occupied. No stronger than he was when the army moved out of winter quarters, and having exhausted his appeals to the States without getting so much as a single battalion completed, or any militia, his strength was on paper rather than in an operating force. It was not strange that his inactivity was criticised, for some action was expected from the combined forces. As it was, he could only watch and wait, for everything depended on the fleet of the Count De Grasse. He could inquire about the state of the magazines, the probable supply of shipping available at Philadelphia on short notice, and the movement of guns intended for his army ; but the great point must remain in suspense.

The needed intelligence came in the middle of August. The fleet of De Grasse, with a considerable body of land forces, was to sail direct to the Chesapeake, and was due at that point about August 15th. Both Rochambeau and Washington pressed Barras to sail for the same place, using the rumor of the coming of a British fleet under Admiral Digby as a reason why the French naval force should not remain separated. New York had just been reinforced by three thousand Hessians, making the success of an attack still more problematical. These considerations led to a determination to move to Virginia all of Rochambeau's army, and as much of the Continental force as could be spared. Three days later the actual march began, and on the 30th, leaving the command at New York to Major-General Heath, Washington set out for Philadelphia. To put the men in a good temper, he wished to give them one month's pay in specie, for it was many months since they had seen any part of their pay in any form. Morris pleaded the difficulties, made an effort to obtain the means, and, failing, was obliged to borrow it of the French, not knowing how he could replace it when the time came. Fortunately, on August 25th Laurens returned from France with the money loaned by the King, and thus enabled Morris to meet his obligations.

On the many difficulties encountered in the long journey, and the manner of overcoming them, it is unnecessary to dwell. Reaching Williamsburg on September 15th, Washington found his plans had not been materially changed. The two French fleets had effected a junction, and the scanty supplies of forage, provisions, and transportation had not done more than to throw

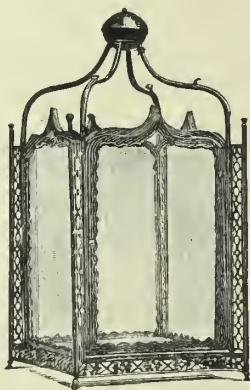
some delays on the march. Nearing the accomplishment of his plan, he showed his eager impatience. To Major-General Lincoln, who was in command of the main force, he wrote on September 15th: "Every day we now lose is comparatively an age. As soon as it is in our power with safety, we ought to take our position near the enemy. Hurry on then, my dear sir, with your troops on the wings of speed. The want of our men and stores is now all that retards our immediate operations. Lord Cornwallis is improving every moment to the best advantage; and every day that is given him to make his preparations may cost us many lives to encounter them." Even at this late day, when Cornwallis was caged in York and Gloucester, De Grasse was reluctant to remain in the Virginia rivers, but wished to go to sea to receive there any attack the British might make. Only after much persuasion did he relinquish his design, and take up the part in the general plan assigned to him. "The resolutions that you have taken in our circumstances," ran Washington's soothing letter to him, "prove that a great mind knows how to make personal sacrifices to secure an important general good. Fully sensible of those, which you have made on the present occasion, I flatter myself that the result of the operations, conducted under your auspices, will compensate them by its utility to the common cause."

Once before York, the operations moved swiftly and smoothly. On the night of October 6th the trenches were opened, and on the evening of the 14th two redoubts on the enemy's left were carried by storm, giving the Americans command of the entire British line. Defense was useless under such disadvantages, and

Cornwallis on the 17th asked for terms, which Washington gave in fair, even liberal, articles, without involving the blunder of the Saratoga convention or the embarrassments of the Charleston capitulation. On the 19th the victory was announced to Congress in moderate language, and with a general distribution of praise among the American and the French officers. "The singular spirit of emulation which animated the whole army from the first commencement of our operations, has filled my mind with the highest pleasure and satisfaction, and had given me the happiest presages of success. . . . I should be wanting in the feelings of gratitude, did I not mention on this occasion, with the warmest sense of acknowledgment, the very cheerful and able assistance, which I have received in the course of our operation from his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau and all his officers of every rank in their respective capacities. . . . I wish it was in my power to express to Congress, how much I feel myself indebted to the Count de Grasse and the officers of the fleet under his command, for the distinguished aid and support which has been afforded by them, between whom and the army the most happy concurrence of sentiments and views has subsisted, and from whom every possible co-operation has been experienced, which the most harmonious intercourse could afford."

The sentences are formal and do not carry any idea of the elation of victory. It should be added that without Washington's persistence in one object, and bending both of the French naval commanders to his wish while apparently yielding his judgment, the surrender of Cornwallis would not have been accomplished in so

short a time. Having a definite purpose, and conscious of his own weakness if he were thrown on his own resources, Washington sacrificed many lesser details to assure the great one—an undivided attention to Cornwallis at Yorktown. There was enough glory for all. But for the French, the siege could never have been undertaken; but for Washington, it would have been lightly set aside for purely naval operations. With Rochambeau the influence of the American General was dominant from their first meeting. In returning acknowledgments to Congress for the vote of thanks, Washington added: "In performing my part towards its accomplishment, I consider myself to have done only my duty, and in the execution of that I ever feel myself happy; and at the same time, as it augurs well to our cause, I take a particular pleasure in acknowledging, that the interposing hand of Heaven, in the various instances of our extensive preparations for this operation, has been most conspicuous and remarkable."



CHAPTER IV

PEACE



REAL glory and advantage gained so easily by the allies only made Washington the more anxious to complete the conquest of the southern States. He must reinforce Greene, but proposed to capture Wilmington first, if the French fleet would convey the troops and necessities. De Grasse, at first favoring the project, pleaded his orders, and decided against it. So General Wayne was sent with the detachment to join Greene. Rochambeau wished to rest his men, and even proposed to winter in Virginia. Washington, seeing that nothing further could be done at the south, prepared to return to the North River, again to take up his watch on New York, and try to instil enough energy into Congress to assure an army in the spring. If the war was to continue, a large force would be essential for assuming the offensive. If peace should be negotiated, the existence of a respectable army would assure better terms.

For any campaign success depended absolutely upon the naval force and the time of its appearance. "No land force can act decisively, unless it is accompanied

by a maritime superiority; nor can more than negative advantages be expected without it. . . . It follows then as certain as that night succeeds the day, that without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it every thing honorable and glorious. A constant naval superiority would terminate the war speedily; without it, I do not know that it will ever be terminated honorably." It would appear that the action of France was all important. So far as Congress was concerned, Washington had no idea of what measures had been or were to be taken for raising an army. Suggestions for filling the battalions had been made, but thus far no formal recommendations had been sent to the States. "My greatest fear," wrote Washington to Greene, "is, that Congress, viewing this stroke in too important a point of light, may think our work too nearly closed, and will fall into a state of languor and relaxation. To prevent this error, I shall employ every means in my power, and if unhappily we sink into that fatal mistake, no part of the blame shall be mine. Whatever may be the winter politics of European courts, it is clearly my opinion, that our grand object is to be prepared in every point for war—not that we wish its continuance, but that we may be in the best situation to meet every event."

The aspect of affairs was changing for the better. The English drew in their forces from North Carolina, evacuating Wilmington, and concentrated them in Charleston. The mere fact of the disaffected suing for grace in the southern States proved that the American cause was again uppermost. The loss of the army of Cornwallis was one not easily met by the English, for

it put an end to the entire plan of campaign. Could it be followed up, the war must end, and Washington while in Philadelphia eagerly asked the question of means. Morris candidly told him the loan from the French would not be adequate to the expenses, and the States must make good the difference. The army had been kept in good temper by the payment of a small part of their dues, and by the promise of clothing and provisions, promises now falling due. The effect of a disappointment would be disastrous, and the means to enable the financier to meet his engagements must be forthcoming, as the very existence of the army depended upon them. Feeding the army by contract had proved effective, and to return to a system of seizing neighboring property would be intolerable. Money must be had, as the system of specific articles had proved wasteful and costly beyond description. These views Washington sent to each State to be laid before the legislatures. The continuance of the war depended upon the vigor and decision of the States at this interesting juncture, and the danger lay in sinking into the lethargy of inactivity and security.

An incident happened at this time which threw much light upon the attitude of Congress to its General. A most perplexing question through the war had been how to make exchanges of prisoners of war. The original obstacle was raised by the British, for they could not enter into a formal arrangement of exchanges with "rebels," and any relaxation of the rule would imply a recognition of the Continental army as other than one of rebels. Again and again commissioners on both sides met to discuss the matter, and no agreement could

be made while that one obstacle remained. The partial and occasional exchanges effected were not of great advantage to the Americans. By them the English obtained an accession of strength, while Washington released men whose terms of service had usually expired, and who were, after their severe experience of imprisonment, averse to again enlisting. Whenever a permanent cartel seemed about to be framed, something always intervened, and left the question in an inchoate condition.

Finally, in February, 1782, Congress by a public resolution invested Washington with powers to negotiate the exchange of prisoners on the broadest scale. This was what the General had long desired, and would now have executed, but for a secret resolution, passed at the same time, prohibiting the exchange of Cornwallis by composition. The British holding no prisoner of equal rank must offer a number of lower grades according to a tariff already adopted. This secret resolution embarrassed Washington. "By the public resolve all former restrictions are taken off, and I am at liberty to go into a general exchange without limitation. When it therefore shall be found, that Lord Cornwallis is still detained, those officers of ours (particularly our full colonels, most of whom can only be exchanged on composition), who will be sufferers on that account, will naturally apply to me for the reasons. I must either submit to their opinions on a conduct so apparently strange, or, to justify myself, must be under the necessity of betraying a secret vote of Congress." The southern members had placed him in this cruel dilemma by insisting upon holding Cornwallis to be exchanged

for Henry Laurens, captured on his way to the Hague, and now lying a prisoner in the Tower. The exception of such a man as Cornwallis from exchange would put an end to all hope of a cartel, and enable the British to charge bad faith against the Americans, and refuse to support their prisoners, thus imposing a very heavy charge upon the nearly emptied money chest of Congress. The resolution was modified, but the incident illustrated the partial motives by which Congress was directed.

The election of Major-General Lincoln as Secretary at War removed all possibility of a reappearance of General Gates in any office of trust. Morris was introducing order and accountability in the financial arrangements, lacking only the means to make a solvent and active department of government. His system of contracts had proved of great benefit, and he was fertile in expedients for seeming to pay while really postponing payment to a future time. The true want, next to money, was men; and now that the country was filled with men who could tell of their sufferings in service, it was idle to depend upon voluntary enlistments. "The attempt is vain, and we are only deceiving ourselves and injuring the cause by making the experiment. There is no effectual method to get men suddenly, but that of classing the people, and compelling each class to furnish a recruit. Here every man is interested; every man becomes a recruiting officer."

After remaining in Philadelphia for four months, where his advice was freely drawn upon by Congress and his support often invoked by the Superintendent of Finance, Washington went to Newburgh, where he

established his headquarters on the first of April. He was hardly settled before he was called upon to perform a disagreeable duty. A number of loyalists had made an incursion in New Jersey, and captured a small body of troops stationed on Tom's River. The commander, Captain Joshua Huddy, was taken a prisoner to New York, and was a few days later hung by some refugees, commanded by a Captain Lippincott. Such wanton barbarity called for action, and the American officers were unanimous in opinion that retaliation was justifiable and expedient, and Lippincott, or should he not be given up, some officer of Huddy's rank among the prisoners, should be the sufferer.

The question of retaliation had often come before Washington. When the cruelties said to be heaped on Ethan Allen were known to him, he wrote to Howe in severe terms, threatening the same treatment on Brigadier-General Prescott. "The law of retaliation is not only justifiable in the eyes of God and man, but absolutely a duty, which, in our present circumstances, we owe to our relations, friends, and fellow-citizens." When Congress wished to inflict some punishment for the insults shown to General Lee, Washington was averse to the measure, knowing that it would only create evils greater than those to be redressed. In Lippincott's case his course was clear. "To save the innocent," he wrote to Clinton, "I demand the guilty." Unless some equivalent was given up, "I shall hold myself justifiable, in the eyes of God and man, for the measure to which I shall resort." Clinton had left America, but his successor, General Robertson, who was in command only one week, asked for a suspension

of judgment. Washington refused, saying the time and place for the execution were fixed ; only a favorable turn of the English court-martial on Lippincott could prevent the dreadful alternative. " It is my most ardent desire," he added, " not only to soften the inevitable calamities of war, but even to introduce on every occasion as great a share of tenderness and humanity as can possibly be exercised in a state of hostility."

Drawing lots among themselves, the British officers saw the choice fall upon Captain Charles Asgill, only nineteen years of age, and a prisoner under the capitulation of Yorktown. This raised a new difficulty. An unconditional prisoner would serve without question ; but was retaliation on a capitulation prisoner justifiable ? Every concession was made to Asgill, and he was permitted to send a representation to Sir Guy Carleton, now in command of the British forces in America ; but on the main issue, that some sacrifice to the manes of Huddy must be made, Washington was firm. Only the British commander could secure a change of action, and after a long inquiry an explanation was given that put actual retaliation out of the question. Even in this matter, so clear and easily solved, Congress kept Washington in suspense, neither hinting any difficulties nor consulting him on the proper course to pursue. At last he became impatient. " Conscious that I have treated that Hon'ble body, and all their measures, with as much deference and respect as any officer in the United States, I expected this aid." The incident had become international, and Vergennes interested himself in the release of Asgill ; but it was not until November 20th that Washington was able to give the required permission.

The welcome news came to Washington from the French minister that the King had granted the use of six millions of livres to the United States. The loan was given in such a way as to show greater confidence in Washington than in the States. Early in May he again turns to the States with an appeal for men and money. "I have the best authority to assure you," he said in his circular letter, "that the court of France is much dissatisfied with this want of vigor and exertion in the States, and with that disposition, which appears willing at least, if not desirous, to cast all the burthen of the American war upon them." The idea of depending upon others for support, beyond that point which absolute necessity dictated, was humiliating, and could not but discourage the allies. Few recruits were joining the army, and Morris gave information that not one penny had yet been received from the States, and he was barely able to feed the army. "If the States will not impose, or do not collect and apply, taxes for support of the war, the sooner we make terms the better; the longer we continue a feeble and ineffectual war, the greater will be our distress at the hour of submission." A desired change was to again bring the pay, clothing, and subsistence of the army into a single channel, and do away with the existing disjointed and different systems adopted by the separate States.

Before this letter could reach its destinations, the rumors of a desire for peace came from England, accompanied by the address to the King in favor of peace, and the bill reported in consequence of that address, enabling his Majesty to conclude a peace or truce with the revolted colonies. So definite a statement, and

coming so directly from the centre of opposition, could not but produce a deep effect, and one more favorable to its suggestions than was expedient. Washington had long preached that "No nation ever yet suffered in treaty by preparing, (even in the moment of negotiation,) most vigorously for the field." Whether it was to be peace or war, a strong army was essential. He could not but suspect the honesty of the desire for peace, although he could not doubt the authority of the papers, coming as they did through Carleton. "We wanted no fresh opiate," he wrote to Livingston, "to increase that stupor into which we had fallen, but I much fear that the idle, and delusive offers of Peace with which the country resounds, will, if it is not powerfully counteracted, be exceedingly injurious to us—not (I apprehend) from any disposition in the people to listen to improper terms, but from a misconception of what is really meant, and the arts which are used to make them believe that Independence, and what not are proffered to them." The court of France hastened to warn America against the insidious approaches of the King.

Sir Guy Carleton, who should have been in command during the entire war, had merits and military abilities controlled the choice of leader, now sought to open communications with Congress and even with the States. The time was inopportune, for Congress wished to display its attachment to France, to remove any doubt of the strength of the alliance. The memory of the commission of 1778, with its fruitless offers and diversions, was still too fresh to permit a possible repetition. Yet Carleton was sincere, and his instructions were such as would lead to distinct advantages to the

Americans, but at great cost to the French. By evacuating all the seaports of the United States, the King could wage a more active and decisive war against France and Spain.

Yet what was the situation of the army? In cipher Washington gave an account of it to Robert Morris. "Minds soured by distresses are easily rankled—as a specimen of it, the privates of the Connecticut Line were the other day upon the eve of a general mutiny. The vigilance of the officers discovered it a few hours before they were to parade and the ringleaders have been tryed and executed—besides this, desertions are more prevalent than ever; by the last returns a greater number went off than ever did in the same space before,—and altho' I know how much you have labored for the means of paying the army, and how inapplicable the remark is to you, 'till you are furnished with these, I cannot help adding, that it is very difficult, if not impracticable to convince military men whose interests, feelings and wants are continually goading them, that people holding civil offices are better entitled to receive the wages of service, punctually than they are." While inculcating patience and forbearance on the army, Washington did not hesitate to speak plainly to Morris, Lincoln, and Congress of the intolerable situation of the officers and soldiers, and of the real wrongs they were obliged to endure. He even sought to turn the army into a propaganda in favor of taxes. Only through taxes could relief be had, and every man was to impress upon his connections and friends the necessity of taxation.

July came and only despatches from France were

awaited to enable Rochambeau and Washington to settle a plan for the new campaign. For the first time Washington had made a short tour of inspection to the northward, going as far as Saratoga and Schenectady, but only for information. The main objects of a campaign were almost the same as in the last year—to drive the British from the southern States, and to conquer the city of New York. Rochambeau's army was left in Virginia so that it could turn either way as occasion arose; and, without warning, the French General began his march northward. Meeting him in Philadelphia, where the two leaders attended a celebration of the birth of the Dauphin, Washington learned that the movement was to escape the sickly season, and the French army would not come farther north than Baltimore. This decision was altered, and the detachment was directed to march to the North River.

Changes in the British ministry occurred and peace rumors increased. A joint letter from Carleton and Digby, dated August 2d, gave Washington definite information of negotiations being conducted in Paris, and of the remarkable concession from the King. "His Majesty, in order to remove all obstacles to that peace, which he so ardently wishes to restore, has commanded his ministers to direct Mr. Grenville, that the independency of the thirteen provinces should be proposed by him, in the first instance, instead of making it a condition of a general treaty." So great a yielding was hardly to be believed, and Washington still urged exertion, jealousy, and precaution. "Too much confidence and supineness would be pernicious in the extreme." He even repelled the statement made by Carleton of a

suspension of hostilities. Only by a mutual agreement of the powers at war, covering both land and naval operations, could such a suspension stand ; and however quiescent Carleton was, the British Admiral was most active off the coasts.

While political and military influences were thus tending towards negotiation the head of the British ministry, the Marquis of Rockingham, died, giving a rude check to the peace party. He was succeeded by Shelburne, whose assertion that the sun of Great Britain would set the moment American independency was acknowledged, had been well known in the States. Amidst a "torrent of expectation" of an approaching peace, Washington held himself aloof, not believing that the necessities of Great Britain were such as to enforce a truce with independence, or that the obstinacy of the King, and the probable consonant principles of some of the leading ministers, had been so altered. He wished to proceed as if no negotiations were on foot, yet quoted Franklin's laconic description of the temper of the English nation : " They are unable to carry on the war, and too proud to make peace." .

His immediate anxieties lay nearer home. Rochambeau, with his army, had joined him, but brought the elements of discontent in that his good equipment cast a strong light on the needs of the Americans. Throughout the Continental army there was a total want of money, of credit, and almost of the means to exist from day to day. The officers were in debt ; there was nothing of their pay available for their families, who were suffering ; and with the approach of peace, there was no prospect save that of misery and poverty. The

James Madison.

From the painting by Gilbert Stuart at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me.



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pride of men and officers suffered in being unable even to maintain appearances. "Only conceive the mortification," Washington wrote to the Secretary at War, "they (even the general officers) must suffer, when they cannot invite a French officer, a visiting friend, or a travelling acquaintance, to a better repast, than stinking whiskey (and not always that) and a bit of beef without vegetables will afford them." The general discontent was on the increase, as Congress did not appear anxious even to ascertain the claims for pay and make provision for their future settlement. The ingratitude of the public was a subject of common talk with the soldiers, and they felt keenly the absence of the wish to soothe their feelings or brighten their prospects. During a campaign, the army could be held together; but in winter quarters where the suffering was too present to be overlooked, no one could answer for the consequences. "It is high time for a peace."

It was intimated that Washington wished to continue the war for the good of the army; others were thought to favor the continuance of war until the government had become a strong and compact force, clothed with powers adequate to its ends. So far as Washington was concerned, he eagerly desired peace, but it must be a peace on honorable terms. For more than a year he had panted for retirement. "I can truly say, that the first wish of my soul is to return speedily into the bosom of that country, which gave me birth, and, in the sweet enjoyment of domestic happiness and the company of a few friends, to end my days in quiet, when I shall be called from this stage." This was a confession made in June, 1782, and repeated many times

before his wish could be gratified. He had entertained a hope of spending this winter at Mount Vernon, which greatly needed his careful attention ; but the temper of the army, now more irritable than at any period of the war, prevented. The dissatisfaction had reached an alarming height, and combinations of officers were made to resign at given periods in a body, pointing to mutiny and disorganization. Heretofore the officers had stood between the privates and the public, often quelling outbreaks at the risk of their lives. As they were now nearly as much discontented as the men, their good influence was no longer exerted. Fortunately, the extremity was not reached, and the symptoms of unrest took the form of an address to Congress.

The French army had orders to go to the West Indies if the British should evacuate either New York or Charleston. In anticipation of the latter event, Rochambeau's force marched to Rhode Island, under pretext of going into winter quarters, and embarking on vessels, left the continent for which he had done so much, and in so excellent a manner. It was with cordial regret that Washington parted with his good ally, and the last letters were on both sides full of expression of friendship and that courteous and personal attachment inseparable from high companionship. No longer counting upon the aid of the French, Washington was led to examine his own resources, and always with increasing anxiety. The English army at New York would probably be reduced, but he could not be certain of having a force sufficient to conquer it. "I am free to confess, I have accustomed myself not to be oversanguine in any of my calculations, especially when I

consider the want of energy in government, and the want of that disposition in too many of the people, which once influenced them chearfully to yield a part to defend the remainder of their property." The subject was open to sarcastic treatment, in which Washington did not often consciously indulge. "The army as usual is without pay, and a great part of the soldiery without shirts; and tho' the patience of them is equally threadbare, it seems to be a matter of small concern to those at a distance. In truth, if one was to hazard an opinion for them on this subject, it would be that the army having contracted a habit of encountering distress and difficulties, and of living without money, it would be injurious to it, to introduce other customs."

The error was due to two causes: a want of power in Congress, and a jealousy of Congress among the States. In appealing for separate funds, for a revenue of its own, Congress had taken a step towards increasing its capabilities. Freed from this total dependence on the States for every dollar, a dependence that was absolute in that the States sent in hardly a dollar in response to requisitions, Congress might become efficient for war and negotiation. Many of the States granted the duties and taxes asked for, although some of them imposed conditions that made the grant of little service. Virginia, Washington's own State, gave the impost, but before all the other States had acted, withdrew it. Indignantly the General wrote to condemn the decision. "The alarm bell which has been rung with such tremendous sound of the danger of entrusting Congress with the money is too selfish and futile to require a serious answer. Who are Congress but the people? do

they not return to them at certain short periods? Are they not amenable at all times to them for their conduct, and subject to recall? What interest therefore can a man have under these circumstances distinct from his constituents?"

This plea came from a man who had often been so neglected by Congress as to be placed in a condition of dangerous ignorance. It is not necessary to describe the instance of the Conway cabal, the real strength of which could be and was exerted only through Congress; that was an extreme case. In many other situations he had not been consulted, when his advice would have been conclusive; he had not been informed of pending acts, which were of vital importance to the safety or the future of the army; and his earnest recommendations had been set aside or held so long in suspense as to have outlived their efficacy. Even at this time he had cause for complaint. "I have often thought (but suppose I thought wrong, as it did not accord with the practise of Congress,) that the public interest might be benefited if the Commander-in-chief of the army were let more into the political and pecuniary state of our affairs than he is. Enterprises, and the adoption of military and other arrangements, that might be exceedingly proper in some circumstances, would be altogether improper in others. It follows, then, by fair deduction, that, where there is a want of information, there must be a chance-medley; and a man may be upon the brink of a precipice before he is aware of his danger, when a little foreknowledge might enable him to avoid it."

The situation was, indeed, more critical than he had imagined. Counting upon a successful loan in Holland,

he had pictured a possibility of being able to "rub along yet a little further." Now that he was told that no such loan was being taken by the Dutch ; that in the last year the States had not turned into the Continental treasury enough to pay two days' wages of the army ; that Morris, wearied by the heavy demands made upon his empty coffers, and by the fruitless appeals to the States to fill them, was about to resign, he recognized that he was on the brink of a precipice. The just claims of the army must be met, and if the States remained insensible to these claims, and still refused to make provision for them, he saw disaster ahead. Hamilton, now in Congress, but unforgetting of the necessities of his comrades, felt their rising displeasure, and urged Washington not to discountenance their efforts to obtain redress, but rather, "by intervention of confidential and prudent persons, to take the direction of them." This was the course already pursued by the General, and had already borne fruit in an address from the soldiers to Congress, instead of an open revolt and mutiny, as were threatened. The better arrangements for feeding and clothing the army, entered into by Morris, had been of great assistance in keeping the soldiers in fair humor ; to learn now that he was to resign, and the man who had won in a measure the confidence of the army was driven from office by the indifference of the States to the common cause, was a severe blow to Washington.

His uneasiness was increased by evidence that the control of the army was passing beyond him. Two anonymous letters, ably written, were circulated among the officers at Newburgh, calling them to meet and

discuss the situation of the army. With no little art the claims were set forth, and the neglect shown was emphasized. With deep design a remedy was described as in their own hands, a remedy that could appeal only to passions inflamed by injustice and cruel suffering. The tendency of these papers was too apparent, and invited precipitate and dangerous action. Washington at once issued a call for a meeting of the officers, wishing to take charge of any movement of redress. This was rendered somewhat delicate, as one of the most effective parts of the addresses was directed against Washington. The man who should recommend moderation and longer forbearance was to be suspected; and the General was known to favor moderation.

At the meeting, assembled in the public hall so recently used to celebrate the anniversary of the French alliance, Washington read a carefully prepared paper, using his glasses, on the plea that he had grown nearly blind, as well as old, in the service of his country. Every line betrayed the depth of his feeling, though marked demonstration of passion was denied him. It was a none the less effective answer to a direct appeal to the passions. The anonymous writer, later known to be Major John Armstrong, had offered an alternative either to desert the country, and retire into the back country, or to turn their arms against the federation, and obtain redress by force. Such impracticable suggestions, said Washington, could only come from an emissary of the enemy. Rather place faith in the good intentions of Congress and not distrust its delay, than adopt measures that could dim the lustre of their fame, so justly acquired, and so celebrated for its fortitude

and patriotism. His own feelings were in sympathy with the army, and he gave his pledge to exert whatever ability he possessed, to aid its cause. "Let me conjure you in the name of our common country, as you value your own sacred honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man, who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood gates of civil discord, and deluge our rising empire in blood."

That there was a political element in this movement of the anonymous addresses, was known to many. Philadelphia had for some days been told of dangerous combinations in the army, and those reports were common long before any thought of combining had been suggested to the officers. It was from Philadelphia that the first impetus came, and from connections nearer to Gates than to any other leader. "It is generally believed," Washington informed Joseph Jones, "that the scheme was not only planned but also digested and matured in Philadelphia, and that some people have been playing a double game, spreading at the camp and in Philadelphia reports, and raising jealousies, equally void of foundation, until called into being by their vile artifices." The plot, if plot there was, overreached itself, and the meeting was unanimously in favor of moderate measures. For the moment the storm was stilled, and Washington fulfilled his promise by again urging Congress to call upon the States to do simple justice to the army.

At this moment, intelligence was received of the

preliminary articles of peace, signed in November, 1782. However satisfactory the news was, he believed the preliminaries very inconclusive and contingent, so far as they related to a general pacification. It was the policy of Great Britain to draw America from her allies, and he could not believe the King was so ready to make a complete change of policy. At the end of March, 1783, the knowledge of a general peace was given to him; "an event, which cannot fail to diffuse a general joy throughout the United States, but to none of their citizens more than to the officers and soldiers, who now compose the army."



CHAPTER V

THE ARMY



GREATER responsibilities came with peace than had accompanied war. "It will now be our own faults," Washington wrote to Livingston, "if we do not enjoy that happiness which we have flattered ourselves this event would bring. To see such measures taken as will ensure this, is all that remains for me to wish—I shall then enjoy in the bosom of my family a felicity that will amply repay every care."

The Confederation must be altered. However well fitted as a preliminary step towards a permanent system, it contained elements that were destructive of itself. State politics and unreasonable jealousies and prejudices had brought it to a pass where the most important functions of government were paralyzed. Having no funds of its own, and depending upon the States for every dollar, it was helpless to enforce its requests and had no power to demand. Washington had long pressed the question. "No man in the United States is or can be more deeply impressed with the necessity of a reform

in our present confederation than myself. No man perhaps has felt the bad effects of it more sensibly ; for to the defects thereof, and want of powers in Congress, may justly be ascribed the prolongation of the war, and consequently the expenses occasioned by it. More than half the perplexities I have experienced in the course of my command, and almost the whole of the difficulties and distress of the army, have their origin here."

Justice and gratitude were the two qualities to be cultivated. Public creditors must be satisfied under the first, and the army must receive some evidence of good faith under the latter. He well knew the temper of the army, and was convinced that it would act only within its rights. The demands made previous to dispersion involved a complete settlement and a partial payment of the pay due. Men who had served for six years without receiving any pay, and subsisting on what was a bare subsistence ; officers who had run in debt to feed and clothe themselves, and had borrowed of their friends and relatives to make good the deficiencies in pay, looked upon these demands as moderate. If separated, and dispersed among the States, there was no more reason for expecting a recognition than at present, and their influence would be less. Therefore they wished their accounts to be ascertained, and some evidence given of the public debt to them ; and, to enable them to get out of camp and to reach their homes, some part of this debt in cash—one month's pay in hand, with a reasonable assurance of receiving two months' further pay in a short time, would be sufficient. Should Congress undertake to disband the army without liquidating the accounts, he could not answer for the consequences. The situation

was very delicate, and the suspicions of the officers of some such measure had been awakened.

As a political factor the army was a dangerous instrument to handle. Keen as had been its distress, and much as it had been discussed in camp, the majority were incapable of reasoning back to a true cause. The assertion that Congress was at fault was as acceptable as the charge that the States were alone to blame. They would as readily believe that Congress intended to play them a trick, as that the remedy lay in their own power. Washington always insisted upon equality of treatment, and nothing more. If civilians were regularly paid and the army was not, there was injustice to the army. If the accounts of the quartermaster's department were liquidated and those of the soldiers were not, the same injustice was wrought. Yet he opposed vigorously the idea of making the army mere puppets to establish Continental funds, fearing lest the true interests of both soldiers and officers would be sacrificed to secure a political advantage.

Notice of the cessation of hostilities was sent from Congress to Washington, but, in spite of his suggestions and entreaties, it was not accompanied by directions for disposing of the army. Naturally the men who had enlisted for the war would not ask what distinction lay between this formal notice and the actual proclaiming of a peace; they would assume that the war was ended, and look upon themselves as no longer bound by their enlistment. Washington consulted his officers on the advisability of suppressing the notice of cessation, fearing the effect on the war-men of its publication. They advised against the suppression, but

recognized the necessity for Congress to come to some early determination of the period of these men's service. Where so little of real benefit could be given to the men, Washington proposed to allow them, as a gratuity, the arms and accoutrements they then held. Apart from their serving as an honorable testimonial from Congress, there was a sentiment grateful to the favored. "These constant companions of their toils and dangers, preserved with sacred care, would be handed down from the present possessors to their children, as honorable badges of bravery and military merit; and would probably be brought forth, on some future occasion, with pride and exultation, to be improved with the same military ardor and emulation in the hands of posterity as they have been used by their forefathers in the present establishment and foundation of our national independence and glory."

Sentiment could not control the decision of Congress. One part of it was for discharging the men at once, thus saving a heavy expense. Another objected to discharging them, but wished to give furloughs until a definitive peace, when a full discharge could be given. In either event, money was needed to pay the men at least a part of what was due to them, and Morris insisted that he had not even paper to pay; but when the idea of furloughs was adopted, he issued his own notes payable in six months, and asked the States to receive them for taxes.

As general of the army Washington had certain duties to perform, certain responsibilities to fulfil; and as citizen of a State he was interested in his own conduct of what was properly his function. He had

become the centre of action. Congress, though jealous of his power, turned to him for assistance. The army, almost desperate from its necessities and ripe for revolt, looked to him to secure a recognition of their just due, and some compensation for sufferings endured. The people, however, indifferent to Congress, regarded Washington as the most powerful agency in the field for reform or for securing present advantage, and recognized that his power lay in his sense of justice, his balance, and his scrupulous regard for the civil power. It was not known that he had been asked to assume kingly attributes, and had indignantly declined, administering a rebuke that prevented any recurrence of the idea to those who had erred honestly in suggesting it. It was not known that on many occasions he had stood between the army and the ignorance or ill will of Congress, refusing to admit that political exigency could supplant right and honor. It was not known to what acrid and unreasoning criticism he had been subjected from the very men whose interests he was striving to serve and whose claims he was upholding, even at the risk of losing his reputation and, in consequence, his influence, with those striving against his efforts. It was known that in no crisis had he faltered in his devotion to the cause, and in no event had he swerved from the line of duty to subserve any wish or interest of his own. A faithful servant of Congress, he was a sincere upholder of the rights of soldier and citizen; and, in the gradual decline of Congress, he had come forward as the one strong link binding the States into a combination, as yet weak and impracticable, yet capable of development into a full and complete union.

As a general he had pleaded the cause of the army before Congress, and extorted from that reluctant body the form of what was needed. As a citizen he turned to the States to obtain the substance, and in a circular letter argued his case with high merit. He was strong in his position, for he was about to make his final bow as the military leader. "The great object for which I had the honor to hold an appointment in the service of my country being accomplished, I am now preparing to resign it into the hands of Congress, and to return to that domestic retirement which, it is well known, I left with the greatest reluctance; a retirement for which I have never ceased to sigh, through a long and painful absence, and in which (remote from the noise and trouble of the world) I meditate to pass the remainder of life in a state of undisturbed repose."

Happy as had been the issue of the contest, and successful as it had been in securing a recognition of independence, there was yet an option left, whether the United States of America should be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable, as a nation. Their national character must be established or ruined. It was only in their united character, as an empire, that their independence was acknowledged, or their power regarded among foreign nations. To maintain this character it was essential that Congress should exercise those prerogatives with which they were clothed by the Confederation, and its powers should be increased. "It is indispensable to the happiness of the individual States, that there should be lodged somewhere a supreme power to regulate and govern the general concerns of the confederated republic, without

which the Union cannot be of long duration." Not to dwell upon the anarchy and confusion certain to exist at home, a dissolution of the Union would put an end to all treaties with foreign powers, and leave the States to be intrigued for or made the sport of any designing nation anxious to secure advantage in America. "We shall be left nearly in a state of nature; or we may find, by our own unhappy experience, that there is a natural and necessary progression from the extreme of anarchy to the extreme of tyranny, and that arbitrary power is most easily established on the ruins of liberty abused to licentiousness."

As a nation, the States should be just, and fulfil the public contracts with the same good faith as bind the individual. The public creditor must have his due, and the Continental debt charges must be fully and promptly provided. With the impost in mind, he directed his argument against the States unwilling to make the grant. "If, after all, a spirit of disunion, or a temper of obstinacy and perverseness should manifest itself in any of the States; if such an ungracious disposition should attempt to frustrate all the happy effects that might be expected to flow from the Union; if there should be a refusal to comply with the requisition for funds to discharge the annual interest of the public debts; and if that refusal should revive again all those jealousies, and produce all those evils, which are now happily removed, Congress, who have in all their transactions shown a great degree of magnanimity and justice, will stand justified in the sight of God and man; and the State alone, which puts itself in opposition to the aggregate wisdom of the continent, and follows such

mistaken and pernicious counsels, will be responsible for all the consequences."

The claims of the army were just, and based upon resolutions of Congress as absolutely binding upon the United States as the most solemn acts of confederation or legislation. The half-pay for life and commutation into five years' full pay granted to officers should not be regarded in the odious light of a pension, but as a reasonable compensation for valuable service, given at a time when Congress had nothing else to give. "It was the only means to prevent a total dereliction of the service. It was a part of their hire. I may be allowed to say, it was the price of their blood, and of your independency ; it is therefore more than a common debt, it is a debt of honor ; it can never be considered as a pension or gratuity, nor be cancelled until it is fairly discharged." It was not alone with the past he was concerned ; there was a provision for a peace establishment to be adopted, and the recommendations of Congress upon it were endorsed. The letter closed with a prayer for the protection under God of the States ; but the more personal note was far reaching. "I now bid adieu to your Excellency as the chief magistrate of your State, at the same time I bid farewell to the cares of office, and all the employments of public life. It remains, then, to be my final and only request that your Excellency will communicate these sentiments to your legislature at their next meeting, and that they may be considered as the legacy of one who has ardently wished, on all occasions, to be useful to his country, and who, even in the shade of retirement, will not fail to implore the Divine benediction upon it."

The appeal was differently received among the States. For Washington personally, they had fair words and resolutions expressive of their thanks and gratitude for his long and unselfish service. For the recommendations he made, they expressed a willingness to comply or an unreadiness to endorse, according to the spirit of party. Even in his own State, Virginia, there was no little murmur against what was called the "unsolicited obtrusion of his advice."

How unstable the conditions were Congress knew a fortnight later, for the mutiny of the Pennsylvania line showed beyond question the weakness of the "sovereign authority of the United States." The army as a whole was not concerned, and the character of these troops of a day was such as to make the outbreak the more criminal. Washington insisted a distinction should be made. "Upon taking all the circumstances into consideration, I cannot sufficiently express my surprise and indignation at the arrogance, the folly, and the wickedness of the mutineers; nor can I sufficiently admire the fidelity, the bravery, and the patriotism, which must forever signalize the unsullied character of the other corps of our army." Although most of the veterans had gone with their furloughs, without a settlement of their accounts, or a farthing of money in their pockets, these Pennsylvania levies, which had not borne the heat and burden of the war, were in open revolt. A detachment was sent from West Point, under the command of Major-General Robert Howe, but this could not prevent the intimidation of Congress by the mutineers and its adjournment to Princeton, whence it negotiated a settlement that reflected little credit upon itself, upon

Pennsylvania, or upon the revolting men. Howe's force was not actually called upon to act.

While awaiting the definitive treaty, Washington's position was becoming more and more irksome ; "without command, and with little else to do, than to be teased with troublesome applications and fruitless demands, which I have neither the means or the power of satisfying." Sending Steuben to receive the surrender of the frontier posts from the British General in Canada, Haldimand, he determined to visit certain of the places in northern New York, of which he had heard and written so much. Leaving his headquarters he went as far as Crown Point, and westward to Fort Schuyler, making the journey so rapidly that he was again at Newburgh in less than three weeks from the start. It enabled him to see the difficulties of at once occupying the more western stations, like Detroit, for which he could only make such preparations as would lead up to the eventual possession.

Meanwhile Congress had requested his attendance, that certain military matters and the arrangements for peace might be discussed and the necessary measures framed. That some consultation was needed was shown daily, for that body could do little without more definite suggestion and greater strength than it held in itself. The opportunity was a good one for honoring the General of the army, but the form finally fixed upon came to naught, and was not entirely suitable to the man or the occasion. It provided for a statue of bronze, in which the General to be represented in a Roman dress, holding a truncheon in his right hand, and his head encircled with a laurel wreath. This representation was to rest on

a marble pedestal, on which were to be represented some of the principal events of the war. Writing at the time, the French minister said this statue was the only mark of public gratitude which Washington could accept, or the government in its poverty could offer.

Proceeding to Princeton, where the sessions were still held, Washington attended upon Congress, being introduced by two members. The President, Elias Boudinot, read the somewhat formal address, explaining the cause of his being called, and expressing the lively satisfaction of the assembly in felicitating him upon the success of a war in which he had acted so conspicuous a part. "It has been the particular happiness of the United States that, during a war so long, so dangerous, and so important, Providence has been graciously pleased to preserve the life of a general who has merited and possessed the uninterrupted confidence and affection of his fellow-citizens. In other nations, many have performed eminent services, for which they have deserved the thanks of the public. But to you, Sir, peculiar praise is due. Your services have been essential in acquiring and establishing the freedom and independence of your country. They deserve the grateful acknowledgements of a free and independent nation."

The General's reply was in as formal sentences, expressive of his gratitude. "Notwithstanding Congress appear to estimate the value of my life beyond any services I have been able to render the United States, yet I must be permitted to consider the wisdom and unanimity of our national councils, the firmness of our citizens, and the patience and bravery of our troops, which have produced so happy a termination of the

war, as the most conspicuous effect of Divine interposition, and the surest presage of our future happiness. . . . Perhaps, Sir, no occasion may offer more suitable than the present to express my humble thanks to God, and my grateful acknowledgment to my country, for the great and uniform support I have received in every vicissitude of fortune, and for the many distinguished honors which Congress have been pleased to confer upon me in the course of the war."

One of the objects in inviting Washington to Princeton was a desire to soften the distressing tedium which he experienced at Newburgh. If amusement was the end, it affected even the public business, as a full attendance of the members was not to be had, and a representation sufficient to discuss great national matters could not be collected. The vote of seven States was required to determine the seat of government, and the jealousies among the different States would not permit seven votes to be cast in favor of any one place. The southern members would not come to Princeton, and the public offices could not be accommodated, and therefore could not be summoned.

Sir Guy Carleton gave notice that he would evacuate New York during the month of November, and in October the proclamation of Congress for the dissolution of the army was published. It only remained to issue the last orders of the General to the army, and these were prepared by Washington, near Princeton, on Sunday, November 2d. The hardships were past, and the bright side must remain. "Every American officer and soldier must now console himself for any unpleasant circumstances which may have occurred by a recollec-

tion of the uncommon scenes in which he has been called to act no inglorious part, and the astonishing events of which he has been a witness." The country offered prospects of happiness in which the brave men, now laying aside their military character for that of the citizen, would participate. He promised more. "Nor is it possible to conceive that any one of the United States will prefer a national bankruptcy, and a dissolution of the union, to a compliance with the requisitions of Congress, and the payment of its just debts; so that the officers and soldiers may expect considerable assistance, in recommencing their civil occupations, from the sums due to them from the public, which must and will most inevitably be paid."

To ensure this the troops must carry into civil society the most conciliating dispositions, "and that they should prove themselves not less virtuous and useful as citizens than they have been persevering and victorious as soldiers." The army could become a propaganda of correct political doctrine. "Although the General has so frequently given it as his opinion, in the most public and explicit manner, that, unless the principles of the Federal Government were properly supported, and the powers of the Union increased, the honor, dignity, and justice of the nation would be lost forever; yet he cannot help repeating, on this occasion, so interesting a sentiment, and leaving it as his last injunction to every officer and every soldier, who may view the subject in the same serious point of light, to add his best endeavors to those of his worthy fellow-citizens towards effecting these great and valuable purposes, on which our very existence as a nation so materially depends."

For one and all he had a kindly word, expressing the strong obligations he was under for the assistance so generally received. "He presents his thanks in the most serious and affectionate manner to the general officers, as well for their counsel on many distressing occasions as for their ardor in promoting the success of plans he had adopted; to the commandants of regiments and and corps, and to the other officers, for their great zeal and attention in carrying his orders promptly into execution; to the staff, for their alacrity and exactness in performing the duties of their several departments; and to the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers, for their extraordinary patience and suffering, as well as their invincible fortitude in action. To the various branches of the army, the General takes this last and solemn opportunity of professing his inviolable attachment and friendship. He wishes more than bare professions were in his power; that he were really able to be useful to them all in future life."

On the morning of November 25th the American troops marched into New York City, and Washington and Governor Clinton followed. The event was celebrated by a dinner at Fraunces' Tavern, at which congratulatory addresses were exchanged and patriotic toasts were given. About one week later, the last British vessel left the harbor, and Washington could wish Sir Guy Carleton and his troops a "safe and pleasant passage." For the General the most difficult task yet remained to be performed. Assembling at the same tavern on the 4th of December, the officers of the army were joined by Washington, who had thus wished to take leave of those who had so long and so closely been

Alexander Hamilton.

From the painting by John Trumbull at the Chamber of Commerce, New York.



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associated with him. The simplicity of the affair added to its dignity. Raising a glass of wine he said: "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you. May your latter days be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious." He then wished each one present to come forward and take him by the hand. The depth of feeling left no room for words; and after one and all had passed before him, in silence they followed him to the wharf to see him take the ferry. A corps of light infantry lined the way, but silent, and presenting arms like statues. From his barge he waved his hat to his companions-at-arms—and the parting was over.

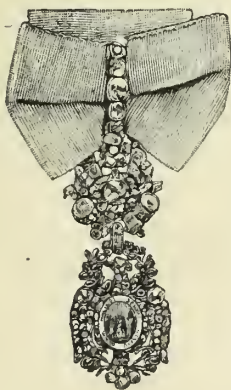
After a few days at Philadelphia, he prepared to follow Congress to Annapolis, there, as he believed, to take his final leave of public life. By slow stages, stopping at nearly every place of importance to receive addresses, he made his journey, and asked Congress what form was necessary for the occasion. To Jefferson was entrusted the preparation of the ceremony, and again was it simple. Attended by his aids, Washington entered the hall of session, and being seated, the Secretary said the Congress was prepared to receive his communications. Rising, Washington read his short message of abdication. "Happy in the confirmation of our Independence and Sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence; a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which, however, was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme Power of

the Union, and the patronage of Heaven." A word in favor of his aids, and a prayer for the protection of Almighty God over his country followed, and "Having now finished the work assigned to me, I retire from the great theatre of action; and, bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life." The niceties of expression had been weighed. He had first requested permission to retire, but had altered it to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of his country. Jefferson, no mean critic of language, wrote, "the address was worthy of him."

Although President Mifflin read the reply, it was written by Jefferson, and possessed the grace of expression with the force of truth. "The United States, in Congress assembled, receive with emotions too affecting for utterance the solemn resignation of the authorities under which you have led their troops with success through a perilous and a doubtful war. Called upon by your country to defend its invaded rights, you accepted the sacred charge, before it had formed alliances, and whilst it was without funds or a government to support you. You have concluded the great military contest with wisdom and fortitude, invariably regarding the rights of the civil power through all disasters and changes. You have, by the love and confidence of your fellow-citizens, enabled them to display their martial genius and transmit their fame to posterity. You have persevered, till these United States, aided by a magnanimous King and nation, have been enabled, under a just Providence, to close the war in freedom, safety and

independence ; on which happy event we sincerely join you in congratulations. Having defended the standard of liberty in this new world ; having taught a lesson useful to those who inflict and to those who feel oppression, you retire from the great theatre of action with the blessings of your fellow-citizens ; but the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command, it will continue to animate remotest ages."

Handing his commission to the man who less than six years before had plotted to take it from him, Washington listened to the reply, so little consonant with the reader's own views. It was a curious coincidence that should have brought the two men face to face under such circumstances. Leaving the hall, Washington set out for Mount Vernon. One request he made of the Secretary of Congress : that his commission might be returned to him. "It may serve my *grand-children*, some fifty or an hundred years hence, for a theme to ruminate upon, if they should be contemplatively disposed." Congress had already informally considered such an act, and decided to return it in a gold box ; but the intention was never fulfilled.



CHAPTER VI

MOUNT VERNON



AGERLY Washington turned from public service. "I have not only retired from all public employments, but I am retiring within myself, and shall be able to view the solitary walk, and tread the paths of private life, with heartfelt satisfaction. Envious of none, I am determined to be pleased with all; and this, my dear friend, being the order for my march, I will move gently down the stream of life, until I sleep with my fathers." So Washington announced to Lafayette his return to Mount Vernon. But force of habit prevented for a time the full enjoyment of his freedom. To Knox he confessed: "It was not until lately I could get the better of my usual custom of ruminating, as soon as I waked in the morning, on the business of the day; and of my surprise at finding, after revolving many things in my mind, that I was no longer a public man, nor had any thing to do with public transactions."

Fame brought its penalties. Dr. Gordon, a well meaning though somewhat erratic clergyman, wished

to consult the official papers of Washington, in search of material for a history of the war. When Congress shall have given access to its files, replied Washington, you shall also have access to mine ; but it would be an act of discourtesy to the sovereign power to take the lead in the matter. A Dr. Bowie also proposed to use the General's records in a biography. "Any memoirs of my life," was answered, "distinct and unconnected with the general history of the war, would rather hurt my feelings than tickle my pride whilst I lived. I had rather glide gently down the stream of life, leaving it to posterity to think and say what they please of me, than by any act of mine to have vanity or ostentation imputed to me. . . . I do not think vanity is a trait of my character."

Letters from his old friends and companions were welcome, and he answered them with his own hand, maintaining a correspondence even with some of the French officers, on political and personal affairs. His earlier friends in the legislation of Virginia or in Congress, men like Benjamin Harrison, Richard Henry Lee, James Duane, or the younger men, like Jefferson and Madison, could always command his counsel in exchange for information on men and current events. Beyond that there was a host of demands made upon his time and influence, demands reasonable and unreasonable, friendly and impertinent. Writing to Knox in 1785 he gave a picture of this load. "It is references of old matters with which I have nothing to do — applications, which oftentimes cannot be complied with ; enquiries, which would employ the pen of a historian to satisfy ; letters of compliment, as unmeaning perhaps

as they are troublesome, but which must be attended to ; and the commonplace business, which employs my pen and my time ;—often disagreeably.” But with his friends he wished to exchange messages. “Letters of friendship require no study, the communications are easy, and allowances are expected, and made. This is not the case with those which require researches, consideration, recollection, and the de—I know what to prevent error, and to answer the ends for which they are written.”

The Countess of Huntingdon wished his advice and assistance in spreading Christianity among the Indians in the western country. The papers of General Charles Lee were about to be published, and they were filled with abuse of Washington. He would give no advice, saying his difference with Lee was on public not private grounds. Houdon came to make a cast for his statue, and the artist Pine gave him long sittings. “At first I was as impatient at the request, and as restive under the operation, as a colt is of the saddle. The next time I submitted very reluctantly, but with less flouncing. Now, no dray-horse moves more readily to his thill than I to the painter’s chair.” As to visitors, his house was so overrun with them, that he made a special note in his diary on June 30, 1785, “dined with only Mrs. Washington, which, I believe is the first instance of it since my retirement from public life.” Nearly two years later he compared his home to a well-resorted tavern, as scarcely any strangers did not in passing spend a day or two at it.

When he stirred abroad, it was impossible to escape the attentions forced upon him. Whether it was to

Richmond, where he was well known, or to Philadelphia, where he was much less known, or to Maryland on business, the people turned out to greet him, the authorities read a formal address to him, and if there were any troops within reach, they were paraded as a guard of honor. These indications of popularity were spontaneous and sincere, and were about the only form in which the man could be honored by his fellow-citizens. In August, 1785, he was in Maryland looking over the course of the proposed improvement of the Potomac. On August 5th his diary recorded: "After breakfast, and after directing Mr. Rumsey, when he had marked the way and set the laborers at work, to meet us at Harper's Ferry, myself and the directors set out for the same place by way of Fredericktown in Maryland. Dined at a Dutchman's mill two miles above the mouth of the Monocacy, and reached Fredericktown about five o'clock. Drank tea, supped, and lodged at Governor Johnson's. In the evening the bells rang and guns were fired; and a committee waited upon me by order of the gentlemen of the town to request, that I would stay the next day and partake of a public dinner, which the town were desirous of giving me. But, as arrangements had been made, and the time for examining the Shenandoah Falls previously to the day fixed for receiving laborers into pay, was short, I found it most expedient to decline the honor."

The confinement incident to all these duties told upon his health, and in 1785 he complained of heavy and painful oppression of the head, and other sensations, due to a want of exercise. The active life he had led for nearly eight years formed habits of body little suited

to a sedentary one. He looked around for a secretary, wanting a "single man of good character and decent appearance (because he will be at my table, and with my company), of liberal education, and a master of composition." The duties would be various, and doubtless included many details not expected in other households. "To write letters agreeably to what shall be dictated. Do all other writing which shall be entrusted to him. Keep accounts, examine and arrange and properly methodize my papers, which are in great disorder. Ride, at my expence, to such other States, if I should find it more convenient to send than to attend myself to the execution thereof. And, which was not hinted at in my last, to initiate two little children (a girl of six and a boy of 4 years of age, descendants of the deceased Mr. Custis, who live with me, and are very promising) in the first rudiments of education." Among the applicants for the position was Noah Webster, the American schoolmaster; but he did not take the appointment. William Shaw served from July, 1785, till the arrival of Tobias Lear, in May, 1786.

Nine years of neglect had thrown his affairs into great confusion, and he had felt the want of money. As early as June, 1781, he had written to Crawford, his land agent: "My whole time is, and has been since I came into the service, so much engrossed by the public duties of my station, that I have totally neglected all my private concerns, which are declining every day, and may, possibly, end in capital losses, if not absolute ruin, before I am at liberty to look after them." His fears were almost realized, as his agents were incompetent to manage his properties to advantage. Some of his bonds

were paid off in depreciated paper money, inflicting a heavy and irreparable loss upon him. The tenants on his western lands were refusing to pay rent, and moving on to lands still further west, where no process of law could reach them. His settlements on the Ohio were broken up, and the servants, procured at such trouble and expense, betook themselves to other parts, taking up lands on their own account. His trusted overseer, Lund Washington, had rendered accounts only when it pleased him, and even then in a very imperfect form. A rebuke was given. "It is not to be supposed that all the avocations of my public duties, great and laborious as they have been, could render me totally insensible to the *only means* by which myself and family, and the character I am to maintain in life hereafter, is to be supported." He was coming home at the peace with empty pockets, and knew not what was his dependence. His estates, which formerly enabled him to buy what was needed, do not seem to have paid Lund's wages. "Worse than going home to empty coffers, and expensive living, I shall be encumbered with debt." He felt that his fortune was impaired, and that his private concerns did not wear the most smiling countenance.

One of the most profitable undertakings should have been the mill in the western country, which he had built with so much care and placed in the charge of Gilbert Simpson. Rumor said it had more custom than any mill west of the Alleghany Mountains, but added that the manager had been more attentive to his own interests than to those of his employer. Washington called for an accounting, and that it was only in part satisfactory was shown by a package of Virginia paper

money sold in Philadelphia more than a century later, still in a wrapper bearing an endorsement in Washington's writing, "Given in by Gilb. Simpson, 19 June, 1784." He attempted also to inquire into the situation of his western lands, the titles to some of which had been set aside by designing men. He not only held the original patents, but could assert a right "founded upon the first discovery of the land, the first improvement of it, the first survey." Some of his land rights had not been located, and he was now anxious to place them. In case persons were found on his lands, who had rented from others and improved in ignorance of the rightful owner, they were to be permitted to remain at a moderate rent.

He was also desirous of renting his lands on some systematic plan. Having a firm confidence in the quality of his holdings, and in the certainty of their becoming valuable, he did not wish to rent for long terms, lest he should be deprived of the rise in rentable values. Yet every immigrant or settler would be as desirous of a reasonably permanent occupation, and at a fixed rental. He wished therefore to give the tenant some inducement to take his lands under a system which would be advantageous to both parties. "I will only add," he wrote to the President of Princeton College, "that it would give me pleasure to see these lands seated by particular societies, or religious sectaries with their pastors. It would be a means of connecting friends in a small circle, and making life in a new and rising empire (to the inhabitants of which, and their habits, new comers would be strangers) pass much more agreeably than in a mixed or dispersed situation."

He had every faith in the future of these lands. They were situated on important rivers, well furnished with land streams with good mill sites, stored with meadow ground, and abounded in fish and game. He wished to rent; but having no children, and knowing the cares of distant estates, he would sell provided he could obtain a good price for the entire holdings, upwards of thirty-two thousand acres. Otherwise he preferred to retain ownership, being well satisfied of their superior value and the certainty of obtaining his own terms as the country gained in population.

The need of skilled labor was still marked. In the last year of the war Lund proposed to hire some of the British prisoners, then kept in Virginia, but did nothing in the matter. The readiest method offered after the peace was to obtain immigrants, or indentured servants, now a somewhat rare article. A ship bearing some Palatines entered at Baltimore in March, 1784, and Washington wished to engage a house joiner and brick-layer. "You would do me a favor by purchasing one of each for me, if to be had, I would not confine you to Palatines. If they are good workmen, they may be from Asia, Africa or Europe; they may be Mahometans, Jews, or Christians of any sect, or they may be Atheists. I would, however, prefer middle aged to young men, and those who have good countenances, and good characters on ship board, to others who have neither of these to recommend them; altho' after all, I well know, the proof of the pudding must be in the eating."

The practices of Virginian agriculture were even less to his liking than before the war. His observations in

the eastern and middle States had shown him one great source of wealth which was still almost totally neglected in the south—grazing lands, or improved meadows. “My countrymen,” he wrote in 1782, “are too much used to corn blades and corn shucks; and have too little knowledge of the profit of grass land.” He had seen good meadow in New York, many miles from any large town, selling for from thirty to sixty pounds an acre, and believed the same result, or something near it, could be accomplished in Virginia. The course of husbandry was not only unprofitable, but very destructive to the lands, and to introduce a better system, Washington thought of securing a thoroughbred practical English farmer, one who understood the best course of crops, how to plough, sow, mow, hedge, and ditch, and “above all, Midas-like, one who can convert every thing he touches into manure, as the first transmutation towards gold:—in a word, one who can bring worn out and gullied lands into good tilth in the shortest time.”

He had changed his course of crops, no longer growing any tobacco. He even proposed to do away, as far as possible, with Indian corn, then, as now, generally looked upon as a necessary plantation crop. As a substitute, a complete course of husbandry as practised in the best farming counties of England was the end to be attained, a really radical change under the best of conditions, and impossible when the keen, observing master was obliged to entrust his operations to overseers. Some change was demanded, as he complained each year of a want of ready money, and an increasing difficulty of getting any even by way of loan.

In September, 1786, he wrote of being obliged to sell some lands or negroes to meet a debt falling due, and a month later he complained of the expensive manner in which he was compelled to live, and which admitted of no diminution of income. In February, 1787, he had offered lands for sale at very moderate prices, to obtain money, and had not been able to make a sale. To his mother, he was more explicit. In sending her fifteen guineas, all he had, and even they were due to another, he added: "I have now demands upon me for more than £500, three hundred and forty odd of which is due for the tax of 1786; and I know not where or when, I shall receive one shilling with which to pay it. In the last two years I made no crops. In the first I was obliged to buy corn, and this year have none to sell, and my wheat is so bad, I can neither eat it myself nor sell it to others, and tobacco I make none. Those who owe me money cannot or will not pay it without suits, and to sue is to do nothing; whilst my expences, not from any extravagance, or an inclination on my part to live splendidly, but for the absolute support of my family and the visitors who are constantly here, are exceedingly high; higher indeed than I can support without selling a part of my estate, which I am disposed to do, rather than run in debt, or continue to be so." Yet pressed as he was at times for ready money he was liberal in providing for others, and kept at his home a number of young people, whose guardian he became.

The welfare and endeavors of the officers of the late army interested him, and his efforts to obtain a recognition of their claims led them to look to him as still their leader.

The opposition to half-pay for the officers of the Continental army, whether for life or for a term of years, was transferred in some States to the Society of the Cincinnati. Before disbanding, the officers had formed a social and charitable society, to perpetuate the spirit of brotherly kindness, and also to promote and cherish the union among the States. Washington was made its first president, and had already issued a call for its first meeting, to be held in Philadelphia, in May, 1784, when mutterings of suspicion and criticism began to be heard. The institution, it was charged, violated the spirit of the American constitutions. Not as yet having taken definite form they could not be met; but Washington urged that the first assembly be of note. "I think not only the whole number chosen should attend, but the abilities of them, should be coolly, deliberately and wisely employed, when met, to obviate the prejudices and remove the jealousies, which are already imbibed, and more than probably, through ignorance, envy, and perhaps worse motives, will increase and spread." Before the meeting Burke's pamphlet on the society was published, charging that the purpose of it was to create a nobility, a class of "hereditary patri-cians." This pointed to the clause of the constitution of the Cincinnati making membership hereditary in the eldest male posterity. Natural equality should be the rule, and all privileges and prerogatives must be frowned down.

Objections so puerile yet had their weight, for they represented a political force. Washington, not a little disturbed by this unforeseen criticism, turned to Jefferson for advice, who frankly told him, with some

exaggeration, the causes of opposition to the society. As a result, the meeting at Philadelphia entered upon a revision of the principles set forth in the constitution, and Washington had already formulated what he believed should be done, in order to allay the public suspicion. Anything of a political tendency should be struck out; the hereditary principle was to be dropped absolutely; no more honorary members were to be admitted, nor should any subscription or donation be received from any person not a citizen of the United States. As to the funds, which the critics believed to be for the purposes of corruption, they might be placed in the custody of the States, to be used only for the purposes intended. He would also abandon the annual meetings, using Jefferson's argument: "that nothing loosens the bands of private friendship more, than for friends to put themselves against each other in public debate where every one is free to speak and to act."

Some of these changes were made, but as the elections drew near, it was clearly seen that Burke's object was a vulgar political or electioneering strike, to discount the running of the officers of the late army for civil offices. It was clear that he did not fully understand the principles of the institution. However, the alterations quieted public clamor. So scrupulous was Washington in his desire to remove all possible cause for criticism that he would have abolished the society at once, publishing the reasons, to prove that the officers had more love for their country than did these narrow-minded critics.

The opportunity arose to once more take up the question of joining the waters of the Potomac and Ohio

rivers. When on his tour to Fort Schuyler, he noticed how Oneida Lake was connected with Ontario, and viewed the portage between Lake Otsego and the Mohawk River at Canajoharie. He studied maps and made searching inquiries about the country, and, prompted by these actual observations, "could not help taking a more contemplative and extensive view of the vast inland navigation of these United States," and could not "but be struck with the immense diffusion and importance of it, and with the goodness of that Providence, which has dealt her favors to us with so profuse a hand." It was with the possibilities of his own State that he was most concerned. Jefferson, now in Congress, wished a beginning to be made, as nature had "declared in favor of the Potomac, and through that channel offers to pour into our lap the whole commerce of the western world." Knowing the general opinion that public undertakings were carelessly managed, and much money spent to little purpose, he appealed to Washington to take the superintendence of the work.

The situation of Washington's western lands troubled him, and he determined to visit them. This was in place of a more extensive journey which he had planned in the previous October, involving a tour of all the eastern States, thence up the St. Lawrence and through the lakes to Detroit; from there to Lake Michigan, by land or water, and down through the western country, by the Illinois River to the Mississippi, and down the same to New Orleans. He was to return by Pensacola, and through Georgia and the Carolinas. In suggesting it to Lafayette he intimated that it might never be

made, but it was his wish to set out in April. Spring came, and the trip to Philadelphia for the Cincinnati meeting promised a fair opening for the long tour; but two causes prevented. His private business was not in good trim, and he was unwilling to be indebted to the British for his passport to Niagara. Not until September, 1784, was he able to go westward, and solely for the purpose of visiting his lands on the Ohio. Arriving at the Monongahela he learned of Indian outbreaks, and turned into the then wild and unsettled country watered by the Cheat River and its branches. Traveling on horseback, he accomplished nearly seven hundred miles, the most substantial result being a careful study of the possibility of joining and improving the waterways.

One incident of his tour made some impression upon him, filled as it was with the highest possibilities for the very project he had in mind. At Bath he saw a model of Rumsey's boat, constructed to work against stream, and was a witness to actual experiments in running water of some rapidity. Certifying that the "discovery is of vast importance, may be of the greatest usefulness in our inland navigation," he continued to show an interest in Rumsey and his works. In 1790, a steam craft of Fitch was running at Philadelphia, but the President did not use it.

To obtain a share, even a monopoly, of the western trade a canal should join the Potomac to the Ohio. It was a shorter and easier passage from Detroit to tide-water by way of Virginia, than by either Albany or the St. Lawrence. Even Pennsylvania labored under greater disadvantages, from the cost and difficulty of making

a connection between the Schuylkill and the western rivers. With New York and Pennsylvania about to enter the field, something must be done by Virginia, or her natural advantage would be lost. Not that there was not room for all, but to Virginia belonged the greatest share. The political gain of a number of such connections was not to be lightly weighed, for the more communications opened to it, the closer would this rising world of the west be bound to the interests of the States. As the flanks and rear of the United States were held by other and strong powers, some cement should be applied to unite the western country to the middle States, and turn its commercial growth in that direction. The improvement should extend both to the James and the Potomac rivers.

The letter in which Washington gave his reasons for the plan, and suggested surveys, was laid before the Assembly of Virginia, and naturally attracted much attention. In November, Washington himself went to Richmond, to meet Lafayette, and had some conferences with the members. It must be a private company, however, acting under a State incorporation, and the question of tolls, and necessity of Maryland's acquiescence, delayed the passage of a law. Gates, who happened to be at Richmond, was associated with Washington to negotiate an agreement with Maryland; but falling ill, the entire burden fell upon Washington. He was successful, and Virginia at once incorporated the companies. Both States took some shares in the Potomac corporation, but only Virginia aided the James undertaking. The act directed that the Treasurer of the State should subscribe fifty shares in the Potomac and

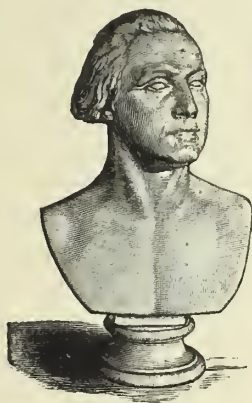
one hundred shares in the James, to be vested in Washington and his heirs, the intention being to give him some substantial reward, in a manner least injurious to his delicacy, and least dangerous as a precedent. It was generally said that his financial matters were in a low state, and some imprudent members raised the question of giving him a pension. The river schemes offered a better means, and would relieve him from making direct money subscriptions to the scheme he had so much at heart. Lafayette noticed his enthusiasm, and Madison commented upon it as showing that "a mind, capable of great views, and which has long been occupied with them, cannot bear a vacancy."

The gift was made in a handsome manner, and the preamble of the law could hardly have said more in praise of the man to be honored. "It is their wish in particular, that those great works for its [the country's] improvement, which, both as springing from the liberty which he has been so instrumental in establishing, and as encouraged by his patronage, will be durable monuments of his glory, may be made monuments also of the gratitude of his country." The message was received by Washington with a mixed feeling of surprise and gratitude. He did not wish to show disrespect to the generous intention of the State, by refusing the gift, and the more, as a refusal might be construed into an ostentatious display of disinterestedness or public virtue. Yet he wished to keep his views and actions as free and independent as air, allowing no room for suspecting that sinister motives had the smallest influence in the suggestion. Would not these shares be looked upon as a pension, and he as

a dependent? Would not their acceptance prevent him from freely offering his sentiments in the future? He concluded that he could not accept them for himself, but only in trust for the use and benefit of the public.

While eagerly pursuing the canal policy, he came to be at variance with his friends on a very important and far-reaching matter. The Mississippi River was the natural waterway to the ocean, and as matters were then situated, the only direction in which the crops of the Ohio region could be sent with profit. The Spaniards, always a little behind the present, would not permit a free navigation of the river, turned New Orleans into a closed port, and in fact erected a barrier near the mouth of the stream, more effective than any bar nature had made. While Washington recognized that Spain would gain by making New Orleans a free port, he could not see that the Mississippi was of immediate importance to the States. He even thought its closure would be of advantage, as it would allow time to open and make easy the waterways between the Atlantic States and the western country. His reasoning was political. "There is nothing which binds one country or one State to another, but interest. Without this cement the Western inhabitants, who more than probably will be composed in a great degree of foreigners, can have no predilection for us, and a commercial connexion is the only tie we can have upon them. It is clear to me, that the trade of the Lakes, and of the River Ohio, as low as the Great Kanhawa if not to the Falls, may be brought to the Atlantic ports easier and cheaper, taking the whole voyage together, than it can be carried to New Orleans; but, once open

the door to the latter before the obstructions are removed from the former, let commercial connexions, which lead to others, be formed, and the habit of that trade well established, and it will be found to be no easy matter to divert it, and vice versa. When the settlements are stronger and more extended to the westward, the navigation of the Mississippi will be an object of importance, and we shall then be able, (reserving our claims) to speak a more efficacious language, than policy, I think, dictates at present." Neither to relinquish nor to push the claim at this time was his policy. "Whenever the new States become so populous and so extended to the westward, as really to need it, there will be no power which can deprive them of the use of the Mississippi." By temporizing now, Kentucky could be kept quieted, and nothing would be sacrificed to Spain.



CHAPTER VII

THE CONSTITUTION



WITH so much to occupy his thoughts, public questions weighed upon his mind. The disinclination of the States in 1783 to grant more power to Congress, the unreasonable jealousy of one another, and the evident intention of each to act independently of the others, filled him with anxiety. If these prejudices could not be conquered, independence had been secured to little purpose. Foreign influences were to be feared, and in comparison the fear of Congress was foolish. "For my own part, although I am returned to, and am now mingled with, the class of private citizens, and like them must suffer all the evils of a tyranny, or of too great an extension of federal powers, I have no fears arising from this source, in my mind ; but I have many, and powerful ones indeed, which predict the worst consequences, from a half-starved, limping government, that appears to be always moving upon crutches, and tottering at every step."

For nearly two years this question was in abeyance,

and conditions favorable to its solution were rapidly passing away. The action of New York in seeking to make an independent treaty with the Indians, interfering with negotiations between the Confederation and the tribes, was an indication of the growing spirit. New York also refused to grant the impost in 1785, although it had been willing to give it in 1783 under conditions. Local jealousies, hostile tariffs, at home and abroad, and retaliatory legislation were bringing to the mercantile classes a full consciousness of the disadvantages of division and independent action. The pressure thus brought to bear in commercial questions was being transformed into political agitation. As Washington wrote in June, 1785: "The late movement of the mercantile interest exhibits a recent proof of the conviction it is working in the popular mind, but it is unfortunate for us, that evils which might have been averted, must be first felt, and our national character for wisdom, justice and temperance, suffer in the eyes of the world, before we can guide the political machine as it ought to be."

The majority should rule, and if the southern States feared a navigation law, it lay with them to make combinations and secure themselves some advantage. The plea that certain States would gain more than others by commercial regulations, would not hold for the same reason. Above all, it was useless to talk of separation. "I confess to you candidly," he wrote to McHenry, in August, 1785, "that I foresee no evil greater than disunion; than those *unreasonable* jealousies, (I say *unreasonable*, because I would have a *proper* jealousy always awake, and the United States on the watch to

prevent individual States from infracting the constitution with impunity,) which are continually poisoning our minds and filling them with imaginary evils to the prevention of real ones." So long as the Union or the States individually were sovereigns as best suited their purpose, or so long as it was one nation to-day and thirteen nations to-morrow, foreign powers would refuse to treat with them on any terms.

He therefore took up with ardor the proposal to give to Congress the power to regulate commerce. Madison believed it would be wise to urge the change on the ground that the power was to be exerted against Great Britain, thus securing the support of the strong animosities prevailing against her. Washington argued that the restrictions imposed on American commerce by England would do more to counteract them, than any action of Congress, for they were teaching the States to look to a common head for safety. The first important step towards this end had been taken at Mount Vernon in March, 1785, when commissioners from Maryland and Virginia met to discuss the jurisdiction over the waters of the Chesapeake and the rivers common to the two States. As the Ohio and its branches were included in the general scheme of canal communication, it became necessary to consult with Pennsylvania; while Delaware was concerned in some Chesapeake improvements. Virginia, under the lead of Madison, invited all the States to send delegates to a convention at Annapolis, in September, 1786, to consider and decide upon such powers, as should be necessary for Congress to act under, in short, a revision of the Confederation. In this movement Washington showed a keen interest.

His views with respect to the federal government were well known, and he did not hesitate to express the opinion that "there is more wickedness than ignorance in the conduct of the States, or, in other words, in the conduct of those who have too much influence in the government of them; and until the curtain is withdrawn, and the private views and selfish principles, upon which these men act, are exposed to public notice, I have little hope of amendment without another convulsion." The people required to be even more misled before they would be in a fit state to retract from error. A general convention to revise the Confederation was necessary, yet might result in doubtful consequences. "Yet something must be done, or the fabric must fall, for it certainly is tottering."

While many believed that Congress had been too lenient with the States, and would have fared better had it asserted an imperial dignity and command, Washington pointed out the real evil of the situation. Some coercive power was needed to enforce obedience. "Requisitions are a perfect nullity where thirteen sovereign, independent, disunited States are in the habit of discussing and refusing compliance with them at their option. Requisitions are actually little better than a jest and a by-word throughout the land." Public opinion was slowly working round to a remedy, and some respectable characters were speaking of a monarchical form of government without horror. This, to his mind, would be going to the opposite extreme, and tell the same story, of an incapacity for self-government, of a failure of a system based upon equal liberty. The States had neglected to endorse the policy outlined in his last

letter to them as General. He had influence then ; who would listen to him now ?

It is to be admitted that he did not recognize the real cause of the unrest that prevailed, and was too ready to attribute it to influences that were almost without effect. It is true the mercantile class was working for a better control of commerce than thirteen legislatures, acting independently and in opposition, could give. The public creditors also looked to Continental funds for their payment, and were working to secure the grant of the impost. But back of all that was the far more powerful influence of the debtor class, those who owed money and sought for some means of escaping payment. The political effects of the Revolution obtained independence from Great Britain, but they also produced the ruin of one part of the population of the States and the rise of another at its expense. The wild era of paper money, with all its hopes and prospects, gambling in prices and speculation in products, debt repudiating and debt creation, had left a train of consequences that threatened ruin. Only years of patience and self-denial could undo the sorry mischief of this influence, and only the strictest honesty, public and private, could begin to repair the injury still being wrought. When the States turned aside from retrenchment and effective taxation, and once more entered upon the path of paper issues, they were stimulating an already sick frame. When stimulants no longer had any effect, revulsion came.

This is what happened in the eastern States, and Shays' rebellion was distinctly a debtors' uprising. Washington saw in these outbreaks one more proof of

George Washington.

From the original by Gilbert Stuart, painted for Wm. Constable, Esq., and now
owned by H. E. Pierrepont, Esq., Brooklyn, N. Y.



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an unfitness for self-government, when men are left to themselves. He asked whether they proceeded from licentiousness, British influence, or real grievances which admitted of redress. If the latter, how had they been permitted to gain such force? and if the former, why had not the powers of government been exerted? "Let the reins of government then be traced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled upon whilst it has an existence." From Knox he learned the truth about the Massachusetts commotion,—how many in the New England States were determined to annihilate all debts, public and private, to have agrarian laws, which could be easily effected by means of unfunded paper money, to be a legal tender in all cases whatever. Still he saw in them only the consequences of lax and inefficient government. "Thirteen sovereignties pulling against each other, and all tugging at the federal head, will soon bring ruin on the whole; whereas a liberal and energetic constitution, well guarded and closely watched to prevent encroachments, might restore us to that degree of respectability and consequences, to which we had a fair claim and the brightest prospect of attaining."

His singleness of thought proved of immense advantage to those working for a revision of the Confederation, or, if possible, a new constitution. In his correspondence at this time he never omitted to speak of his wish, or of the forebodings created by the events passing before his eye. The Annapolis convention had assembled, but found itself incompetent to effect what was looked upon as necessary, and it issued a call for

a general convention in May of delegates from all the States, to report to Congress the form of a constitution adequate to the purposes of the federal union. Virginia unanimously decided to send delegates, and Washington's name was placed at the head of the list. This act placed him in a position of some embarrassment. Although president of the Cincinnati, he had expressed his intention of not being present at its meeting in Philadelphia, in May, and he could not appear at the same time and place for another object without giving offense to his old comrades. An occasion so interesting as the formation of a constitution would lead him to break his retirement; but his wish to cease to be the head of the society, and the delicate task of accomplishing this result, warned him to be absent during the meeting. Madison urged him to suspend a decision for the present, and the Governor of Virginia, his former aid, Edmund Randolph, joined in the request.

The States drifted, each one in its course, and in the acts of almost all Washington saw cause for anxiety. It was not only the results at home he deplored, it was the effect produced on foreign nations which seemed even more deplorable. That Europe would rejoice to see a failure of republican government was one of his convictions, and he was ready to see foreign influence in events pointing to such a failure. The retention of the western posts had given him much anxiety, and he now saw an opportunity for more foreign interference. Great Britain would not long be an unconcerned spectator of the present insurrections against government, if continued. "That she is at this moment

sowing the seeds of jealousy and discontent among the various tribes of Indians on our frontiers admits of no doubt in my mind; and that she will improve every opportunity to foment the spirit of turbulence within the bowels of the United States, with a view of distracting our governments and promoting divisions, is with me not less certain."

Even in March, 1787, Washington was still averse to attending the constitutional convention, and still taking counsel with his friends. An argument in favor of going presented itself,—that his absence would be regarded as a defection from republicanism, or would be attributed to even worse motives. Congress had recommended the convention, thus giving it the stamp of legality. Yet would not his reputation suffer in case the meeting should come to nought, and was the public mind in a fit state to ensure success? Cautiously he felt his way round these difficulties, now humored and now answered by his advisers, Knox, Madison, and Humphreys. Was the country ripe for so radical a proposition as a new constitution? Yet, would not every attempt merely to tinker the old bring out its imperfections more clearly, and perhaps hasten its collapse? The States, thirsting for sovereignty, would oppose a decrease of their own powers, and every placeman would be against a proposition to abolish his office. He was anxious to try what the convention would suggest, feeling that it was the last peaceable mode of testing the possible continuance of the Confederation. His scruples were overcome, and at the end of March he notified the Governor of his intention to attend, should his health permit. Virginia was the

prime mover of the convention, and Washington was at the head of the delegation from Virginia.

Of his ability to represent the State there could be little question. Of knowledge of government he had little, only what had been so thoroughly learned by bitter experience. His performances in the House of Burgesses had never been notable, though the strong committees generally contained him among their members. In the Continental Congress, he served on military questions, but little outside of them concerned him. As a member of county meetings, he bore the reputation of being the silent member. In spite of this, such was the impression made by his poise, and by his somewhat remarkable faculty for reducing the heart of a question to something practicable, that his services were in demand, and as something more than a figurehead or make-weight. In Virginia his reputation gave power to whichever side he took for his own, and as he grew in repute, his influence grew with it. So constituted was he that he would hesitate long in balancing a question before coming to a decision ; but once decided, he was apt to hold to his views in the face of any opposition. His controversies with Dinwiddie, with Forbes, and with Congress had developed in a marked degree a fixity of opinion, often amounting to obstinacy. Yet it was almost certain to be a safe opinion, and one that was justified in the long run.

For this quality he was indebted largely to his friends. His early political views were guided by George Mason, one of the safest of guides. In the first years of the Revolution Joseph Reed exercised an influence greater than was his due ; later came such

supreme counsellors as Greene, Hamilton, Laurens, and Tilghman, men who held the highest ideals and labored to made them actual. The foreign officers added their mite ; for the warm friendship between Washington and Lafayette, was of even less importance than the cold, bloodless arguments of Steuben and De Kalb, soldiers and nothing more. With Rochambeau's coming, the alteration in Washington's conduct, a gradual change during seven years, became apparent, and it was readily seen how much the man had gained in breadth of view in those years of stress. He took an interest in the affairs of Europe as a whole, and besought his correspondents in Congress to keep him better informed on what was happening—even in India. With the return of peace he came under a new influence, and problems of war gave way to problems of state. It was Mason again, or Madison, Hamilton, and Jay, who gave him the clues to actions ; or it was Jefferson, Grayson, or Richard Henry Lee, who told him what people were saying and thinking. A ready pupil, he studied what they wrote, and in his letters are to be found entire sentences, taken bodily from the correspondence of those men, and made his own.

This was not a confession of weakness ; it was rather an honest admission that there were limits to his abilities, and he was happy to overcome them, if possible. His attitude on the Mississippi question was at first controlled by his wishes for canals—a dominating plan, that shut out the far wider commercial possibilities and necessities of the great western waterway. So in statecraft, he was certain that "honesty was the best policy" for governments as well as for private individuals ; he was

aware the merchants were seeking to construct a system of commercial regulation that would enable them to meet the mercantile policy of Europe upon equal ground; he knew that this could be accomplished in part through the impost, which would give to Congress independent funds, and so enable it to pay its debts and establish its credit; but all these details sank into insignificance by the side of his certainty that the governments of States and Congress were weak, and it was absolutely essential to create a strong national government, possessed of full powers to the ends for which it should be constituted. This faculty of reducing a problem to simplicity was his strength, for he brushed aside all logical refinements and word-splittings, and saw clearly the main issue, clinging to it and enforcing it on every occasion. What would have been a fatal weakness in a politician, in a man willing to bend to expediency, was in him the saving feature.

Having determined to attend the convention, and believing that he would be called upon to preside over its sessions, he began to prepare himself so far as time would permit. Madison had drawn up for his own information, an elaborate account of the ancient forms of government. This Washington carefully copied in his own hand, and it has been published as his own work. He exchanged views with his correspondents on the monarchical idea in the United States, believing it to be a mistake. A government with coercive powers was called for, but he could make no suggestion as to the form of coercion to be applied. He feared the States would send delegates to the convention with too limited powers. "In either of these circumstances, that is, a

partial representation or cramped powers, I should not like to be a sharer in the business. If the delegates assemble with such powers, as will enable the Convention to probe the defects of the constitution to the bottom, and point out radical cures, it would be an honorable employment ; but not otherwise."

Upon the assembling of the Convention, he was named for its presiding officer by Robert Morris, whose guest he was. The honor was the greater as Pennsylvania had in Franklin one who was eminently fit for the place, even better prepared in some respects than was Washington. His long service in colony and in Europe, and his recognized pre-eminence in qualities tending to produce agreement and mutual concession, gave him in these last years of his life a place occupied by no other American. His services in France, great as they had been, put him out of touch with the men who had come forward since 1776, and this disability was a consideration in passing him by, to take Washington. The nomination was made at the suggestion of the entire delegation from Pennsylvania, and received a graceful support from John Rutledge, coming from a State which owed much to the General's care and foresight. Pleading the novelty and importance of the work to be done, and lamenting his want of better qualifications and his inexperience, Washington asked for the indulgence of the body, and behind closed doors the sessions began.

The colorless record of Washington's journal gives no idea of what was being said or done during the weeks this Convention sat, and is rather a list of the entertainments he attended. His love of farming was shown by his visits to country places where he observed

the effects of experiments on the soil, and these more serious ventures were varied by fishing trips and returns to the scenes of his former trials and victories, the battle-fields and place of winter quarters near Philadelphia. Even these made no impression such as to induce him to enter it in his record, being passed over in a bald sentence: "Traversed my old encampment [White Marsh], and contemplated on the dangers which threatened the American Army at that place." Some evenings at the theatre gave him an opportunity to see "The Detective, or, the Servants' Hall in an Uproar"; a comic opera known as "Love in a Camp, or Patrick in Prussia"; a grand masque, "Neptune and Amphitrite"; a concert introducing a moral poem, "The Crusade, or the Generous Sultan"; and even an indifferent reading for charity of Solima, of the poet Hamet. The serious labors in Convention made such relaxation welcome, and he once went to Franklin's to see a mangle, and apparently received a more vivid impression than from many other sights, as he made one of the longest entries in his journal upon its merits "for pressing, in place of Ironing, Clothes from the wash, which machine from the facility with which it dispatches business is well calculated for Table cloths and such articles as have not pleats and irregular foldings and would be very useful in all large families." Some of these were busy days. On July 4th he "visited Dr. Shovats' Anatomical figures, and (the Convention having adjourned for the purpose,) went to hear an Oration on the anniversary of Independence. After which I dined with the State Society of the Cincinnati at Epples Tavern, and drank tea at Mr. Powell's."

From May until September the Convention sat to bring order out of chaos, to harmonize the many differences of opinion, and to frame a constitution. On two matters only was any opinion of Washington noted: one on the originating of money bills, where his first convictions were opposed to giving the House exclusive powers, but his later view was in its favor; and the other on the small representation given to the States. In a body where passions ran so high as to force certain members to leave it and abandon their call to aid in the task set before it, Washington never records a line in his daily notes to indicate differences of view or perils of disunion. His devotion to a single object never misled him into criticising others who differed as to method rather than as to end; and it was ever on the side of moderation that his influence was thrown. Before the result was known, he was already preparing the way for its acceptance. "I wish a disposition may be found in Congress, the several State legislatures, and the community at large, to adopt the government which may be agreed on in Convention, because I am fully persuaded it is the best that can be obtained at the present moment under such a diversity of ideas as prevail." One month later the task was finished, the members dined together, and took a cordial leave of each other. "After which I returned to my lodgings, did some business with, and received the papers from the Secretary of the Convention, and retired to meditate on the momentous work which had been executed."

He was not entirely satisfied with the result, and frankly admitted this to his correspondents; but he saw the complete breakdown of the Confederation, and

almost certainty of anarchy, unless the plan submitted was accepted. The provision for future amendments and alterations made it safe to accept what was offered, and leave to subsequent modification the errors that should be discovered. He wished "good pens" in the gazettes to be enlisted in its behalf, and as it had received the unanimous recommendation of Congress, he anxiously watched its progress through the State conventions. Many of his friends in Virginia were doubtful of its value — Henry, Mason, Harrison, and Richard Henry Lee being opposed to its acceptance even before the State convention to consider it had been selected. Certain it was, that no new general convention would be more successful in meeting the wishes of the people, and would probably fall far short of reaching the agreement already attained. The delay, also, would be dangerous, as giving an opportunity for raising factions, none too scrupulous in exaggerating their fears of the perils involved in any frame of government. The opponents of a measure were apt to be more active than its friends, and the controversy over the proposed constitution formed no exception. "They build their objections upon principles that do not exist, which the constitution does not support them in, and the existence of which has been by an appeal to the constitution itself, flatly denied; and then, as if they were unanswerable, draw all the dreadful consequences that are necessary to alarm the apprehensions of the ignorant or unthinking. It is not the interest of the major part of those characters to be convinced; nor will their local views yield to arguments, which do not accord with their present or future prospects." Union or anarchy, that was the

real question to be decided, and he was wholly in favor of union.

Not to the extent, however, of not being able to admit that the opposition to the constitution might not be based upon principle. A fair-minded man, as he was, he could recognize that antagonists were entitled to be heard, even when he was unable to sympathize either with their arguments or with their methods. Privately he entertained the belief that they would wish to introduce anarchy and confusion, and that they were resorting to pleas and means addressed more to the passions than to the reason. When the conventions of the States began to ratify it — Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, being the first to take action, and favorable action upon it — his fear lest Virginia should take an opposite course increased, for in New York and in his own State was to be found the most pronounced opposition. In Richmond those against the new form of government appeared to have a majority; it did not follow that the convention would be of the same view, and the uncertainty made this assemblage of great import. Washington sought to follow its composition, but he depended upon two or three correspondents at Richmond, and upon strangers and travellers who stopped at Mount Vernon, and whose conclusions were based upon very superficial observation. The adhesion of Connecticut and Georgia to the side of adoption was offset by the rise of Massachusetts in opposition, or as a really doubtful State. A defeat in Massachusetts would certainly be followed by defeat in New York and Virginia, with certain States awaiting the determination of these important members of the Confederation. As

it was, the constitution would not have been adopted in the Massachusetts convention but for the yielding spirit which framed amendments and so gave to the opponents some of their demands. In the success won, and in the conciliatory spirit shown by the minority, Washington saw much gain, and predicted with great confidence the success of the federalists, as they were already called, in Virginia.

The hesitation of New Hampshire had a bad effect in Virginia, giving comfort to the opposition, who redoubled their efforts to rouse the fears and inflame the minds of the people. Lest Maryland should pursue the same tactics, Washington warned Johnson of their pernicious effects, as well upon Virginia as upon South Carolina. He was able to fairly weigh the source of opposition in his own State, for the southern counties were generally against the constitution, and those of the west were almost equally balanced. Whatever support was given came from the northern counties. In his eagerness to secure favorable action, he was led to discountenance amendments. "The truth is, men are too apt to be swayed by local prejudices, and those, who are so fond of amendments, which have the particular interest of their own States in view, cannot extend their ideas to the general welfare of the Union. They do not consider, that, for every sacrifice which they make, they receive an ample compensation by the sacrifices which are made by other States for their benefit ; and that those very things, which they give up, operate to their advantage through the medium of the great interest." He wished nine States to ratify, before the amendments should be considered.

Maryland came into line by a handsome majority, and with such a succession of ratifications, without one rejection, the prospects in Virginia brightened. Not that Washington ever really feared its defeat, but he distrusted his own knowledge of the state of opinion. With seven States having already accepted the constitution, it required only two more to make the government operative, and South Carolina gave one more on the federal part. The convention of Virginia met in June, and from Madison Washington received reports of the proceedings, and of the intrigues and factions in that body. At the end of three weeks both sides were claiming a victory, and the issue was in the balance. After watching the struggle he drew the reflection : "It is a little strange, that the men of large property in the south should be more afraid that the Constitution will produce an aristocracy or a monarchy, than the genuine democratical people of the east." One cause of this was the difference in kinds of property held in the two sections, the slave being a form of investment rapidly going out of the east ; another cause was the difference in form of government, the county system lending itself much more readily to an aristocracy than the township. Virginia by a small majority accepted the constitution on June 25th, four days after New Hampshire had taken the same course. Ten States had ratified, and the Constitution was assured. Washington attended a celebration of the event at Alexandria, and believed more firmly than ever that Providence was disposed to give the States unequalled opportunities for political happiness. Expediency rather than policy should now control the action of those States which had not yet

come to a decision,—New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island. The last named alone stood out.

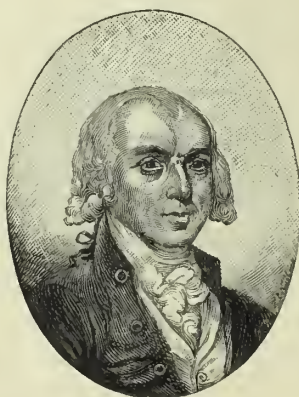
The main question had thus been determined as Washington wished, and it remained to put the machinery of the Constitution into operation. The opposition became so much less abusive and virulent, that federal principles were believed to be gaining ground. To give the instrument a fair trial was the wish of all, and attention was now directed to the election of members of Congress. In this it would be entirely natural to select some anti-federal characters, but too large a number might embarrass the new government and produce premature alterations in the Constitution by amendments. The possibility of secret machinations and undue influence in those elections induced Washington to sound the note of alarm. "I conceive it to be of unspeakable importance, that whatever there be of wisdom, and prudence, and patriotism on the continent, should be concentrated in the public councils at the first onset." The action of New York in recommending another convention for the consideration of amendments promised to reopen the whole question. It was apprehended that to carry "amendments" before the Constitution had been tested was but a method of accomplishing slyly what could not be brought to pass openly, and of undoing all that had been done.

Never an extensive reader, the controversy over the Constitution was so interesting to him that he followed it closely. Hamilton had early sent him some of the letters of Publius on the proposed Constitution, without giving him any clue to the authorship. It was

through Washington's influence that they were printed in Virginia. He placed a high and not unjust value upon these essays. "I have read every performance, which has been printed, on one side and the other of the great question lately agitated (so far as I have been able to obtain them) ; and, without an unmeaning compliment, I will say, that I have seen no other so well calculated, in my judgment, to produce conviction on an unbiassed mind as the production of your triumvirate. When the transient circumstances and fugitive performances, which attended this crisis shall have disappeared, that work will merit the notice of posterity, because in it are candidly and ably discussed the principles of freedom and the topics of government, which will be always interesting to mankind, so long as they shall be connected in civil society."

It must be admitted that abstract reasoning on social rights never found a ready ground in Washington's mind. When it was a definite problem to be solved, he did not hesitate to seek light upon it, and to labor over the principles involved. This ended, as a rule, in success, but it was success from the practical rather than theoretical point of view. He admitted that a Bill of Rights was a good thing, but could never have framed one. His strength lay in seeing a thing clearly and from a position that could be, and generally was, occupied by the majority. This implies the commonplace ; but it is ever the safer when attained by independent effort, through an honest and disinterested weighing of arguments on both sides. On one of the very few occasions in which he entered into a discussion on a feature of the Constitution, it was on the eligibility of

the president for re-election. Jefferson wished him to be ineligible, and Washington wrote : " The matter was fairly discussed in the convention, and to my full conviction, though I cannot have time or room to sum up the argument in this letter. There cannot, in my judgment, be the least danger, that the president will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office, much less perpetuate himself in it, but in the last stage of corrupted morals and political depravity ; and even then, there is as much danger that any other species of domination would prevail. Though, when a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves, and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes. Under an extended view of this part of the subject, I can see no propriety in precluding ourselves from the services of any man, who, on some great emergency shall be deemed universally most capable of serving the public."



CHAPTER VIII

PRESIDENT



As the Constitution was passing its final stage, the office of President was set apart for Washington. If it was his soldier followers who openly wrote of it to him, they only expressed what was a rising feeling. When first brought to his notice, he deprecated any discussion of it. Only with great reluctance had he come from his retirement into public notice during the constitutional Convention, and the fear of being considered unpatriotic had almost obliged him to attend. He was averse to taking up again any occupation that would divide him from that rural life so congenial to his tastes and feelings. "The increasing infirmities of nature and the growing love of retirement do not permit me to entertain a wish beyond that of living and dying an honest man on my own farm. Let those follow the pursuits of ambition and fame, who have a keener relish for them, or who may have more years in store for the enjoyment." When Hamilton repeated the suggestion in August, after the Constitution had been accepted by the State conventions, and

intimated that Washington was indispensable to its first operations, again was the idea set aside, with the wish, "I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles) the character of an honest man." By accepting he would not only become an object of distrust to those who had opposed the adoption of the Constitution, but, after the solemn declarations he had made of not wishing public office, he would be charged with levity and inconsistency, if not with rashness and ambition.

Not to be silenced, Hamilton returned to the matter, answering his objections and placing great stress upon the duty of his accepting a call. "Every public and personal consideration," he said, "will demand from you an acquiescence in what will certainly be the unanimous wish of your country." A crisis left him no alternative but to comply. "On your acceptance of the office of president, the success of the new government in its commencement may materially depend. Your agency and influence will be not less important in preserving it from the future attacks of its enemies, than they have been in recommending it in the first instance to the adoption of the people. Independent of all considerations drawn from this source, the point of light in which you stand at home and abroad will make an infinite difference in the respectability with which the government will begin its operations, in the alternative of your being or not being at the head of it." In such a situation, it would be inglorious not to hazard the glory and reputation he had acquired; and should he not take the office, a failure of the experiment would be laid

against the framers, and they would properly be charged with pulling down one Utopia to build up another, a hazard to his fame greater than any that could follow his affording aid to the system. "I will only add that, in my estimate of the matter, that aid is indispensable."

This was a plea addressed to one of the strongest sentiments of Washington, for it tended to prove that he had taken such steps that it would be dangerous and dishonorable to withdraw. It could not overcome Washington's reluctance even to consider the matter, for he admitted feeling a kind of gloom upon his mind whenever he had been taught to expect to be called upon for a decision. He feared an opposition, for the anti-federalists would have some electors, and the arguments in favor of his own candidacy would give point to those against it. "If I should receive the appointment, and if I should be prevailed upon to accept it, the acceptance would be attended with more diffidence and reluctance than I ever before experienced in my life. It would be, however, with a fixed and sole determination of lending whatever assistance might be in my power to promote the public weal, in hopes that at a convenient and early period my services might be dispensed with, and that I might be permitted once more to retire, to pass an unclouded evening after the stormy day of life, in the bosom of domestic tranquillity."

Hamilton had touched in this way the consideration weighing most with Washington. Dearly as he loved retirement, he loved more dearly his reputation for obeying the call of duty. That call must be loud to supplant all other wishes, and it must come so direct and clear as to be unmistakable. Hamilton had much of

the politician in his nature, but in urging on Washington that circumstances left no option, and a refusal would have the worst effect imaginable, and in all probability throw everything into confusion, he was speaking as a well-wisher to his country. As the weeks passed, the general drift of the popular mind was made more evident, and was more and more in the direction of Washington. From Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, and even Carolina, came messages carrying only one meaning, that Washington could be the first President, and, what was of more weight with him, that he should be, in order to assure success to the measures he had done so much to call into being. He must now breathe life into the government, and make it an active, vital force. He still asserted his wish not to be chosen, and with every fresh assertion only proved that he would accept the call if made.

Hamilton's arguments had sunk deep in his mind, for they now appear, somewhat modified, in his letters as his own thoughts. "Every personal consideration conspires to rivet me to retirement. At my time of life, and under my circumstances, nothing in this world can ever draw me from it, unless it be a conviction that the partiality of my countrymen had made my services absolutely necessary, joined to a fear that my refusal might induce a belief that I preferred the conservation of my own reputation and private ease to the good of my country. After all, if I should conceive myself in a manner constrained to accept, I call Heaven to witness, that this very act would be the greatest sacrifice of my personal feelings and wishes, that ever I have been called upon to make. It would be to forego repose and

domestic enjoyment, for trouble, perhaps for public obloquy ; for I should consider myself as entering upon an unexplored field enveloped on every side with clouds and darkness."

Long before the day of choice came he had given thought to a policy in national affairs. Harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality were necessary to make the Americans a great and happy people. These would be regarded as abstractions, to be accepted by every one, and desirable, if they could become realities. Washington, in announcing them to a friend, saw in them an assurance of permanent felicity to the commonwealth, the path as clear and as direct as a ray of light, leading to the attainment of that object. "My endeavors shall be unremittingly exerted, (even at the hazard of former fame or present popularity,) to extricate my country from the embarrassments in which it is entangled through want of credit." He did not look upon the decrease in foreign commerce as an unmixed evil, as it had permitted the useful arts to be developed at home. "Though I would not force the introduction of manufactures, by extravagant encouragement, and to the prejudice of agriculture, yet I conceive much might be done in that way by women, children, and others, without taking one really necessary hand from tilling the earth."

While this weight of responsibility was hanging over him, he continued to exert his influence in favor of the new form of government. It had been accepted by all the States, save North Carolina and Rhode Island, the black sheep of the lot ; but to make the execution fit and successful it should be defended by those who had

labored for its existence and favored its adoption in its day of trial. He wished a majority of "federal members" to be appointed to the several branches of the new government; otherwise there would remain the danger of confusion through an unwise or premature attempt at amendments. He had good reason for anxiety over the representation of Virginia in the first Congress. The Assembly was believed to be anti-federal, and was certainly much under the influence of Patrick Henry, who had been a strong opponent of the adoption of the Constitution by Virginia. Such was his power that he could control the appointments, and in setting Madison aside, while sending Richard Henry Lee and William Grayson to the Senate, he had stamped the State as against the new government. Both Lee and Grayson asserted that they wished to give the Constitution a full and fair trial, but their known support of amendments, to be adopted prior to the operation of the government, gave a doubtful color to their sincerity. The tactics of their party, for such it was in fact, were not such as could lessen suspicion, for it was proposed so to arrange the districts throughout the State as to assure a majority of anti-federalists in the representation in the lower house of Congress. Washington watched these manœuvres with increasing uneasiness, and described some of the acts of the Assembly as showing a most "malignant disposition" towards the new government.

In other States all the petty devices of electioneering were resorted to, in the hope of influencing a decision. Connecticut was said to have been tricked into accepting the Constitution; yet her appointments were all

federal. Massachusetts, it was reported, had named only one representative for Congress, and was in great political confusion ; yet the federalists won the elections, and even Samuel Adams, the old war horse and long-trusted servant and leader, was not taken because of some doubts on his being warmly in favor of the new government. Maryland was federalist in both State and national appointments. The vote for Washington was unanimous.

As if to heighten and emphasize contrasts, Washington found himself obliged to borrow some money in order to make the journey to New York. For eleven years the estate had not met its expenses, and neither by the collection of old debts, a difficult and precarious method, nor by selling lands, an even more difficult process, could ready money be had. The year 1787 had been one of particular severity, as a drought had obliged him to purchase a good part of the grain consumed on his place. This heavy expense, involving as it did the cost of eight hundred barrels of corn, besides other food products, gave him great anxiety, and really put him in need of money. When the time came for him to go to New York, he did what he "never expected to be driven to,"—he borrowed money on interest.

Before the responsibilities of office had been formally placed upon him, applications for appointments came to him. He had made it a rule to give no recommendations for State positions, although some of his former officers had applied to him for permission to use his name. His embarrassment was therefore great when direct applications were made to him for the promise of

appointments to places not yet actually in force, and which could not exist until the Constitution had been ratified, and the administration of its provisions was in action. His own disinterestedness gave him an idea of public office far other than that of those seeking a salary from need or a place for authority and influence. The only safe rule was simply to refuse to make any pledges. In June, 1788, he was able, with great delicacy, to intimate his concern at being asked for employment under a government which did not yet exist, and with the administration of which (even if adopted and carried into execution) it was doubtful whether he would be connected. Six months later, when he still believed he could find a good excuse for declining the presidency, he asserted with no little force that he fervently and sincerely hoped that he should not have any agency in the disposal of federal appointments. To ask him for a promise was as untimely as it was improper, and as disagreeable as it was embarrassing. If circumstances forced him to accept office, he wished to enter it not only unfettered by promises, but even unchargeable with creating or feeding the expectation of any man living for his assistance to office.

When his friend, Benjamin Harrison, now in some difficulties, applied to him in March, 1789, he explained his position in terms which admitted of no misinterpretation. "I will, to the best of my judgment, discharge the duties of the office with that impartiality and zeal for the public good, which ought never to suffer connections of blood or friendship to intermingle so as to have the least sway on decisions of a public nature. I may err, notwithstanding my most strenuous efforts to

Edmund Randolph

From a painting (artist unknown) owned by Moncure Robinson, Esq., New York.



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execute the difficult trust with fidelity and unexceptionably; but my errors shall be of the head, not of the heart. For all recommendations for appointments, so far as they may depend upon or come from me, a due regard shall be had to the fitness of characters, the pretensions of different candidates, and, so far as is proper, to political considerations. These shall be invariably my governing motives."

With such a rule, to be followed inflexibly, he could meet every request and yet maintain a perfect independence. In truth the demands made upon him would have moved a weaker or more interested man to yield, and having yielded in a few instances, driven him from his defenses and reserve. His old comrades, men who had followed him through the darkest days of the Revolution, men who had wasted their properties and shed their blood for the cause of liberty, came forward to ask favors of him, which he could have granted, but so doing would have bound him to party, to faction, or to individuals. A single error might alienate a State, and the situation was all too delicate to admit of such rash ventures. Apart from public considerations were his personal feelings; and his intense desire to stand well with the country, to be known as a man above any influence other than the public good, led him to adopt what was not only the safest but the best rule of conduct. The good will of the people was to be conciliated, and on their affections was to be raised the edifice of public happiness. Should he run the government for his own ends, or to favor a particular party, he would sacrifice all that he held most dear, the public peace and his own reputation.

As the hour for leaving Mount Vernon approached, he grew more reluctant to go. On April 1st, before the vote for President had been officially determined, he wrote to General Knox: "In confidence I tell you, (with the *world* it would obtain little credit,) that my movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit, who is going to the place of his execution; so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination, which are necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible that I am embarking the voice of the people, and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them, Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness are all I can promise. These, be the voyage long or short, shall never forsake me, although I may be deserted by all men." Two weeks later, Charles Thomson brought from the Congress the official notice of his election. It was fitting that the man who had served as Secretary of the Continental Congress from its first sessions should bear the summons that introduced a new system. The few formal words in which the announcement was made called out a response in as few words, but of deep meaning. "I am so much affected by this fresh proof of my country's esteem and confidence," ran the closing sentences, "that silence can best explain my gratitude. While I realize the arduous nature of the task which is imposed upon me, and feel my own inability to perform it, I wish that there may not be reason for regretting the choice."

Two days later he set out from Mount Vernon, "with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations." From town and city on his route the inhabitants sought to show him honor, presenting addresses, supplying escorts, and attending in crowds. Corps of gentlemen alternated with companies of militia in conducting him from one settlement to another, happy in associating with the president-elect, the most illustrious citizen of America, the Father of the people. Bridges were decorated, vessels were decked with flags, and arches of laurel crossed his road, and near Philadelphia, as "our beloved Washington passed the bridge, a lad, beautifully ornamented with sprigs of laurel, assisted by certain machinery, let drop above the Hero's head, unperceived by him, a civic crown of laurel." With every stage nearer New York the demonstrations seemed to increase. The Trenton scene has become historic, a huge triumphal arch bearing in large gilt letters "The Defender of the mothers will also protect the daughters," with a large sunflower at the summit of the arch, to typify the people's turning to Washington. A sonata was sung in his honor, his path was strewn with flowers, the spectators shed tears, and he passed on. The scene was repeated with variations at Elizabethtown, and he reached New York in company with a committee from Congress, a deputation of State officers and another of city officials, sailing from Elizabethtown in a barge, specially constructed for the purpose, and rowed by thirteen pilots. Amid

federal salutes he landed, and was escorted to his house by the Governor of the State and troops of horse, with ringing of bells and streets aflame with decorations. "I can assure you, with the utmost sincerity," he had written to George Clinton, the Governor of New York, "that no reception can be so congenial to my feelings as a quiet entry devoid of ceremony, be the manner of it what it may."

A week passed between his arrival and his inauguration. Much the same pomp of circumstance was attached to this ceremony—the military parade, the attending delegations, the public oath, and finally the speech to the Congress. However he had borne the ordeal so contrary to his wish, he left a deep impression on the spectators, one of simple sincerity and of dignified earnestness. Never a ready speaker, he did not trust to his memory, but read his inaugural speech, and without ease, being much agitated. "He trembled," was Maclay's record, "and several times could scarce make out to read, though it must be supposed he had often read it before." Another member present described the scene as solemn; "his aspect grave, almost to sadness; his modesty, actually shaking; his voice deep, a little tremulous, and so low as to call for close attention." No recommendation of measures could be made at this early stage, and he confined himself to general subjects and wishes. In the characters around him, he beheld the truest pledges, that "as, on one side, no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views or party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye, which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities

and interests ; so, on another, that the foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the pre-eminence of a free government be exemplified by all the attributes, which can win the affections of its citizens, and command the respect of the world."

The dream of a republican model of government, devoted to preserving the sacred fire of liberty, in which no taint of dishonesty and no distractions of party strife could exist, was one that grew out of an entire devotion to the public good. No one appreciated better than Washington the many difficulties in the way of even a partial attainment of what was essential to make it real. He need only have gone back to the time when he took command of the army, and sought to obliterate all local distinctions and jealousies. Armed with all the powers of a military commander, it required nearly eight years to reduce these differences so as to be of no importance. How much longer time must be demanded for reducing State feelings, now much accentuated by having tasted uncontrolled action and even license, creating in each a strong party intent upon exerting this freedom to its fullest extent. The task of making a people happy was far greater than that of disciplining an army, planning a campaign, or even fighting a battle. The elements were too diverse and of greater force, more inclined to separate and become more distinct than to sink their differences and become united. The formal speech, with its still more formal replies, modelled on kingly usages, could give no suggestion of the real difficulties to be encountered.

The first in time, perhaps the first in importance,

was this question of appointments. However successful Washington had been in fending off applications and resisting the making of pledges before his inauguration, he must now act. Feeling an insuperable diffidence in his own abilities, he asserted his need of the countenance and aid of every friend to himself, of every friend to the Revolution, and of every lover of good government. His task would be easy could one candidate be brought forward for every office with such clear pretensions as to secure him against competition. Instead of one candidate there were many for every place at his disposition, however insignificant, and for many places as yet unprovided for by law. He could only call for testimonials of the abilities, integrity, and fitness of the applicant, leaving a choice for a future opportunity. A certain set of rules for making this choice was slowly forming in his mind, but could as yet be given only in parts. To Richard Henry Lee he stated that State officers who had behaved well in a calling deserved preference in the same line of federal service, and ought to be received into the service of the United States where the same functions belonged as well to a State as to a national position.

The nomination to be first sent to the Senate was that of William Short, to be in charge of the legation of the United States in Paris during the absence of the minister, Jefferson, who had expressed an earnest wish to be permitted to return to the United States. Confirmation was at once given. Nearly six weeks later a number of names was sent in for the revenue service, and a single one, that of Benjamin Fishbourn, was rejected, without any reason being assigned for

the rejection. Touched to the quick by this apparent reflection on his judgment and criticism of his choice, Washington sent in another name, but gave his reasons in full for having selected Fishbourn. Assuming that the Senate had good cause for setting aside the first nomination, the President gave a hint of his disturbed feelings: "Permit me to submit to your consideration whether on occasions where the propriety of nominations appears questionable to you, it would not be expedient to communicate that circumstance to me, and thereby avail yourselves of the information which led me to make them, and which I would with pleasure lay before you."

Only the day before this message was sent to the Senate, a motion had been made in that body providing for giving their advice and consent to the appointment of officers in the presence of the President. Postponed for one day, it was so extended as to cover treaties, and a conference was had with the President. As to treaties he thought an oral communication would be the more desirable, as the many points involved in any treaty would make a full explanation tedious and unsatisfactory. The same rule could be applied to nominations of ambassadors and ministers; but to all others written messages would be his wish. "In this case the acts of the President and the acts of the Senate will stand upon clear, distinct, and responsible grounds." It would be no pleasing thing for the President to hear the propriety of his nominations questioned, while his presence would act as a restraint upon a free expression of opinion. Reversing the opinion just expressed in his message on the Fishbourn incident, he laid down

the rule: "As the President has a right to nominate without assigning his reasons, so has the Senate a right to dissent without giving theirs." An experiment of oral consultation was soon after made on an Indian treaty, and proved so inconvenient that it was abandoned, and written messages became the rule.

Finding less employment for a time than he had anticipated, he called upon the heads of the old departments for some informal communications on their real situation at the time he took office. "For this purpose I wish to receive in writing such a clear account of the department, as may be sufficient (without over-burdening or confusing the mind, which has very many objects to claim its attention at the same instant,) to impress me with a full, precise, and distinct general idea of the United States, so far as they are comprehended in, or connected with, that department." Jay, as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Knox, as Secretary at War, and the three members of the Board of Treasury, were the most affected by this request, for it was so general in its terms as to have required much labor fully to answer. This was particularly true as to the Treasury, inasmuch as the helpless and almost hopeless confusion of accounts, of certificates, and so-called securities coming under its supervision, muddled by every expedient to postpone the day of payment, would have been of little service except as enforcing the necessity for a change. The standing army, that bugbear of the political agitator, included barely six hundred officers and men, widely scattered in various posts, with supplies and armaments in keeping. The postmaster-general was also requested to give an account of his office, lately

under deep suspicion of having studiously interfered with the transmission of newspapers in order to secure political advantage. Yet with such a power, (the charges were really without foundation,) the office was of small proportions. Of all those called upon to report, it was the business of Jay that most concerned Washington. Ere he could receive replies to his request he became seriously ill, and for nearly six weeks was unable to consider any matters not concerned with his recovery. He had some idea of sending for his old friend, Dr. Craik, but refrained lest he should draw him from his practice in Alexandria. It was during this illness that he expressed his readiness to die. "Whether to-night, or twenty years hence makes no difference; I know that I am in the hands of a good Providence."

While awaiting the action of Congress in instituting the executive departments, the personal actions of the President assumed an undue importance. It was not only his sickness that drew public attention to his daily occupations; there already existed a number of critics, watching for a misstep, and eager to seize upon any mistake which could give color to popular suspicions. In spite of his efforts to avoid such a position, Washington did represent a party, the party of the Constitution. In States where that instrument had been accepted with reluctance, by small majorities, or by the appearance of a trick or accidental combination of circumstances, there was a large number of persons only too ready to see in harmless acts a significance of immense portent. The arguments employed by the opponent to the Constitution had sunk deep, and were now repeated with the added strength of facts for support. The executive

was a monstrous power, capable of depriving the States of their powers, the people of their rights. A monarchy, not a republic, had been created, and in Washington these fearsome souls saw the embodiment of this mis-carriage of the popular will. John Adams lay under strong suspicion of being a monarchist at heart, and how could Washington escape the influence, even if he were not already under it?

For some of this feeling the Senate was responsible. The form of the royal addresses to Lords and Commons had been preserved, and replies from Senate and House were to be made, but by what title should Washington be addressed? The Constitution provided for a President, and the House wisely determined to adopt the President as the proper designation of the man. Not so the Senate, where much time was wasted in the vain attempt to clothe dignity with words, and to find a sounding phrase or combination of adjectives which would add greatness to what was already great. This was done without consulting Washington as to his preferences, and he clearly foresaw the uneasiness it would give to many who interpreted the title as an embodiment of the ambitions of the man. "His Highness the President of the United States of America, and Protector of the Liberties of the same" was as unmeaning as it was ridiculous; but to a carping person the phrase meant much danger to the body politic. It was the expression of a desire for personal advancement, and as such contained the seeds of a future subordination of all the powers of government to the control of a dictator. Adams, who was believed to favor titles, came in for his share of animadversion, and indeed he received more

than he deserved, for it was generally reported that he never appeared in public except with a coach and six horses, evidently a monarchical institution. It was useless to assert that two horses were the real number, the six and titles remained for political purposes.

Other matters played upon the sensitive nerves of those who dreaded the introduction of a monarchy. The office of President was a novelty, and while its political functions were determined by the Constitution, the social duties remained to be decided by the man holding the office. Before the inauguration, Washington had exchanged visits of courtesy with the members of Congress, but after his induction into office, the necessity for defining his relations with the public and officials became imperative. From morning till late evening he was interrupted by callers, paying their respects or making those ceremonious visits which are wearisome to mind and body. He found no time for his own uses, and could not give the needed attention to the despatches and official papers pouring in upon him from all quarters. He applied to Adams, Hamilton, Madison, and Jay for advice. He wished for a line of conduct which would "avoid as much as may be the charge of superciliousness, and seclusion from information, by too much reserve and too great a withdrawal of himself from company on the one hand, and the inconveniences, as well as a reduction of respectability, from too free an intercourse and too much familiarity on the other." The presidents of the Continental Congress had been so free in their intercourse as to have brought the office into contempt; "for the table was considered as a public one, and every person, who

could get introduced, conceived that he had a right to be invited to it. This, although the table was always crowded (and with mixed company, and the President considered in no better light than as a *maitre d'hôtel*), was in its nature impracticable, and as many offences given as if no table had been kept."

To avoid extremes, he determined to return no visits, to appoint certain days for receiving generally, and to confine invitations to official characters and strangers of distinction. Some believed the people were prepared for a pretty high tone in the executive, and would have the President neither give nor receive invitations, but this would introduce the idea of too great an inequality, besides closing many avenues of information to him. No explanations sufficed to quiet criticism, and far from New York it was honestly believed, however artfully the fear or impression had been fostered into a belief, that a royal government was being raised with Washington as its lord and exponent.

Ere Congress adjourned at the end of September, word was brought of the death of Mary Washington. Her late years had not been restful either to herself or to those who were connected with her. A proposition to grant her a pension, made in a spirit of friendship by some injudicious enthusiast, had given great pain to Washington, who had done much to make her comfortable, and well knew she was not in real want, but in the enjoyment of an ample income of her own. Checking this ill-advised movement, Washington later learned that his mother was, "upon all occasions and in all companies, complaining of the hardness of the times, of her wants and difficulties; and, if not in direct terms, at

least by strong innuendoes, endeavors to excite a belief that times are much altered, &c., &c., which not only makes *her* appear in an unfavorable point of view, but *those also* who are connected with her." Providing for her wants, he visited her whenever an opportunity offered, and had seen her in March, after it was known he was to be President. "Awful and affecting as the death of a parent is, there is consolation in knowing, that heaven has spared ours to an age beyond which few attain, and favored her with the full enjoyment of her mental faculties, and as much bodily strength as usually falls to the lot of four score. Under these considerations, and a hope that she is translated to a happier place, it is the duty of her relatives to yield due submission to the decrees of the Creator. When I was last at Fredericksburg, I took a final leave of my mother, never expecting to see her more."

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CHAPTER IX

ORGANIZATION



UCH progress was made that Congress had early provided a revenue, and had created Departments of State, of the Treasury, of War, and a Judiciary. Among a very extensive acquaintance Washington made his choice for his advisers, and took men who had been tested for friendship as well as for public service. Knox he knew best of all, as he had almost clung to him through out the war, forcing upon Congress a recognition of his rank and merits. Hamilton stood second, a choice made after Robert Morris had as much as declined. His financial abilities were equalled by his political ambitions; and through the two qualities he brought as much weakness as strength into the administration, but fortunately employed the strength before the weakness. Jefferson had been known to Washington as a Burgess before the Revolution, but never on terms of true intimacy. He had been tested and partially failed as Governor of Virginia, and had served abroad on a futile mission for negotiating commercial treaties, from which he was now returning. His services in Congress had

been great, and he had won a place in Washington's regard by taking a keen interest in the river canals of his State. No one from Virginia, except Madison, could show better claims for office, and Madison was in Congress, where he was slowly altering his closet statesmanship into narrow partisanship. Jay had been long in public life, and had won a reputation for balanced judgment and safe conduct, even though he had antagonized the south by his attitude on the question of the Mississippi. As an advocate of the Constitution he came to Washington, and while the personal intercourse between the two men, apart from an occasional letter, must have been slight, his selection to be Chief Justice was eminently fit. For the law officer of the government Edmund Randolph was named, "from habits of intimacy with him."

The associate justices of the Supreme Court had been appointed before a commission was sent to Jay. Each head of a department was to nominate his force, and Washington refused to bring influence to bear in favor of the many applicants who turned to him. A bare certificate of service was sometimes given to an officer of the old army, but beyond that he did not feel at liberty to go. With not a little exultation, Washington wrote to Gouverneur Morris that the national government was organized, and, "as far as *my* information goes, to the satisfaction of all parties ; that opposition to it is either no more, or hides its head." An echo of the period of storm just completed in the United States was being heard in France, where the people were teaching the king the instability of royal institutions, and doing it in a manner that promised anything

rather than a nation "the most powerful and happy in Europe," as Washington imagined. As if a constitution on paper, the form and not the substance of a government, could cure the growing ills of a century of wars of conquest, of retaliation, of greed, and of grinding oppression through feudal wrong and injustice. It was well to preach temperance, firmness, and foresight to the National Assembly, but he needed to have multiplied the rotten condition of Rhode Island a hundred-fold to begin to measure the situation in France.

Yet the revolution in France was important in its bearings upon the relations to subsist between that country and the United States. Before the Constitution had been accepted by seven States, the minister of France in the United States, Count de Moustier, had approached Washington on a commercial treaty. Pleading his own ignorance and seclusion, and promising to obtain information upon the points involved, Washington took the opportunity to assure Moustier that the American people were extremely well affected to France. Until a central government had been formed, it was useless to look for commercial regulation, one State making one law, and another State adopting an opposite policy. Even with such a government, the trade should be made one of barter, so far as was possible. "In proportion as France shall increase the facility of our making remittances, in the same ratio shall we increase the consumption of her produce and manufactures." This was equivalent to saying that unless France bought the food or raw products of America, the United States could not buy from France, a plea for unhampered commerce not in line with the policy of the day. The trade

with the West Indies he condemned, chiefly because of the principal article derived from them — rum, “the bane of morals and the parent of idleness.” He would even change the methods of farming in those States which had raised horses for export to these islands, substituting sheep and black cattle, thereby obtaining wool and beef in place of the poisonous rum, of which thousands of hogsheads were consumed in the United States.

After Washington became President, Moustier again came forward, and wished to enter into formal negotiations with him on a treaty. Once more pleading that as an individual he was unable to take up the task, and claiming that the experience of nations had proved the expediency of turning such questions over to the proper department, when instituted, he again put the minister off for a time. That the postponement was only temporary he recognized, for he sought to reach an understanding of the situation in which the foreign relations of the States then rested. England, still holding to the western posts, and claiming, in justification, violations of specific agreements under the treaty of peace, refused to yield or to enter into a commercial arrangement. Enjoying a full share of the trade, the ministry saw no reason for raising the question of concessions, or of reviving that more liberal policy which Pitt had brought forward in 1783, and which would have prevented so much of the later misunderstanding. The negotiations with Spain were in the precise stage that power so earnestly wished to maintain,—nothing conceded, everything promised, and no agreement possible. “I wish to know also,” Washington wrote to Jay, after

reading a digested account of what had been done, "whether, if the negotiations are renewed, it can be made to appear from anything which that gentleman [Gardoqui] has said, as the result of an advance towards it from him in his official character." The wily Spaniard had given no such opening, for he was under instructions which provided for nothing but a fruitless interchange of formal notes, and in that state must the matter rest until Spain could be brought to terms. Before Congress adjourned, Washington anxiously inquired of Madison whether he should take the first step in foreign affairs. "Should the sense of the Senate be taken on the propriety of sending public characters abroad—say, to England, Holland, and Portugal?"

Whatever the reply was, nothing was done until October, when Washington gave to Gouverneur Morris, then in France, informal instructions to go to London, to learn the sentiments and intentions of the Court on the full performance of the treaty of peace and on a proposed treaty of commerce. Two topics were introduced as essential: compensation for the slaves carried away in 1783, and the carriage of the products of the United States in American bottoms to the British West Indies. As neither could be answered favorably by England, Morris's mission came to naught, save in showing a wish to renew relations.

During the recess of Congress, the President had made a tour of the eastern States, with a view to acquire knowledge of the face of the country, its growth and agriculture, and the temper and disposition of the inhabitants towards the new government. As early as May he had formed the idea of making a tour of all the

States, "in order to become better acquainted with their principal characters and internal circumstances, as well as to be more accessible to numbers of well-informed persons, who might give him useful information and advice on political subjects. This desire of educating himself by travel was always strong with him, and the experiences of the war only made it stronger. He drove through Connecticut and Massachusetts, and as far as Portsmouth, returning through the same States. One result of the tour was to impress him with the prospects of profit from sheep-raising. A woollen mill at Hartford preferred to use the wool of Virginia, as it was finer than that of the more northern States. Washington suggested to Governor Randolph, of Virginia, to encourage the woollen manufacturing in his State, pointing to the success of the Connecticut venture. From October 15th to November 13th he was on this tour, and returned much improved in health.

Congress met on January 4th and was soon notified by the President that as soon as a quorum could be had he would make an oral communication. Four days later the occasion was presented, and was used in some state. The accession of North Carolina was announced, and the necessity of providing for the common defense was enforced, as well on general principles—"to be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace"—as by the Indian disturbances. Due provision should also be made for facilitating intercourse with other nations, and for encouraging science and literature. Of the subjects mentioned, that of militia, or national defense, was most peculiarly personal to Washington. He had carefully

digested the militia systems of Europe and those suggested by Knox and Steuben, and from this synopsis he had drawn up a plan of his own, to be sent through the Secretary of War to the Committee of Congress appointed to draft a bill. This subject he had made his own.

It was from Virginia that the severest criticism of Washington's administration came, and it had a double origin. Patrick Henry could not bring himself to accept the Constitution, and used his great influence among the people to discredit it. Jefferson, upon his return, found him standing higher than ever in the public estimation, "yet he was so often in the minority in the Assembly, that he has quitted it, never more to return, unless an opportunity offers to overturn the new constitution." But Henry's opposition was to principles, not to individuals. When Hamilton introduced his plan for the assumption of the debts of the States, the contest became personal as well as general. Madison admitted that the plan was well digested and supported by very able reasoning, but he could not bring himself to suppress objections to it, the greatest being its supposed injustice to Virginia and favoring of Massachusetts. Jefferson also began to throw out hints against the measure, and both these men suggested "motives" to account for the perseverance of those who favored the measure. Monroe wrote from Richmond that the assumption would be disliked in Virginia in any form, and Stuart gave much the same opinion to Washington, coupled with mention of speculations, and grasping at power by unwarrantable constructions of the Constitution.

Washington replied to his correspondent with some warmth, and protesting against malignant construction upon matters which upon examination wore better faces than were given to them. The rising jealousy between the southern and the eastern States disturbed him, for he knew that all government must be based upon mutual concession, as well in county as in State or national affairs. If, as was charged, the East was pursuing its own interests, it accomplished its object by union and combined effort, which put the divided South at a disadvantage. "I ask again, which is the most blameworthy, those who see, and will steadily pursue their interest, or those who cannot see, or, seeing, will not act wisely? And I will ask another question, of the highest magnitude in my mind, to wit, if the eastern and northern States are dangerous *in union*, will they be less so *in separation*? If self-interest is their governing principle, will it forsake them, or be less restrained by such an event? I hardly think it would." The opinion in Virginia seemed to be more irritable, sour, and discontented than in any other State of the Union except Massachusetts. The censure so freely bestowed was oftentimes unmerited and uncharitable.

This was particularly true of the slurs cast upon Washington's own conduct. Men who prided themselves upon being stern republicans complained of the pomp of visits, and of the growing elaboration of the President's table. To Mrs. Macaulay, Washington wrote that his wife's "wishes coincide with my own, as to simplicity of dress, and every thing which can tend to support propriety of character, without partaking of the follies of luxury and ostentation." Bland, of

Virginia, stated at the Governor's table at Richmond, that there was more pomp used at New York than at St. James, and that Washington's bows were more distant and stiff. The bows, answered the criticised, were the best he was master of, and given indiscriminately. "Would it not have been better to throw the veil of charity over them, ascribing their stiffness to the effects of age, or to the unskillfulness of my teacher, than to pride and dignity of office, which God knows has no charms for me? For I can truly say, I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of government by the officers of state and the representatives of every power in Europe."

The altered manner of living was telling much upon his health, and again was he near a collapse. On May 9th he took a bad cold, which developed into a "severe attack of the peripneumony kind," and confined him to his room for weeks. The public anxiety was great, and even Maclay, who never lost an opportunity to sneer at the President, recorded his fears. "Every eye full of tears. His life despaired of. Dr. McKnight told me he would trifle neither with his own character nor the public expectation; his danger was imminent, and every reason to expect that the event of his disorder would be unfortunate." Too great an application to business and a want of exercise were responsible for the trouble. The change from active life on the plantations, where his mind had been agreeably amused, to the inactive life at New York, where his thoughts were ever on the stretch, had given him more sickness in a twelve-month than he had had in thirty years. To counteract this influence he thought of taking a large farm near

Philadelphia, where it seemed Congress and the departments were to be fixed, on which he could amuse himself in making experiments in agriculture and obtain a more active habit of living.

The session of Congress lasted until August 12th, and this illness prevented Washington from taking a very active share in the business coming before it. What was done was of great importance as developing the sectional feeling in Congress upon unexpected lines. A difference between the east and the south on commercial questions was anticipated, and appeared when the tariff and tonnage measures were being framed. But the really stronger opposition to Hamilton's funding and assumption plan was not foreseen, and least of all could it have been known that this financial policy was to be a potent factor in forming party lines in Congress and the States. The long and bitter debates in the House on Hamilton's propositions were closely followed by the public, as well by those who had an immediate interest in the suggested manner of dealing with the debts, as by those who now regretted having parted with the public facilities, and looked upon the bills as consummating a gigantic swindle. The rapid rise in the value of securities, and the activity of certain speculators, gave some foundation to the charge of interest, and implicated some public men in these transactions. When the assumption of the State debts was defeated in the House, that vote seemed to determine the question ; but it was now set against the funding of the Continental debt, which had already been accepted by the House. No assumption, said its favorers, no funding ; and even Jefferson admitted that unless there was

funding, the government would come to an end. He would compromise, for "in general I think it necessary to give as well as take in a government like ours."

Washington echoed Hamilton on the main issue, but believed that some proper restrictions and scrutiny into accounts would be necessary to prove its entire justice. "If some States were harder pressed than others, or from particular and local circumstances contracted heavier debts, it is but reasonable, when this fact is clearly ascertained, though it is a sentiment which I have not communicated here, that an allowance should be made them. Had the invaded and hard pressed States believed the case would have been otherwise, opposition would very soon, I believe, have changed to submission in them, and given a different termination to the war."

In Congress the question was earnestly debated, and so far was the bitterness carried that the members could hardly go on with one another. Another measure had been brought forward, involving almost equal intensity and difference of opinion,—that providing for the permanent seat of government. The two places most in favor were Philadelphia and the Potomac, and sectional lines were strictly drawn in the debates. The east and middle States naturally preferred Philadelphia, and the south and west, the more southern location. As the east was strongly in favor of assumption, and the south as strongly opposed, an opportunity for a compromise was offered. Hamilton was the chief agent in the agreement which was made at Jefferson's table, by which the south would give enough votes for assumption in exchange for a like support from the north of

John Adams.

From the painting by J. S. Copley at Harvard University.



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the Potomac location for the capital, and the two measures were passed in that manner. Jefferson, then a willing aid in the scheme, never forgave Hamilton for tricking him, as he claimed, and the bargain became a monstrous iniquity in his eyes when partisan zeal had blinded him to his own responsibility in the matter. If Washington were cognizant of what was being done to obtain an agreement no evidence of it is found in his papers, but he came in for a full share of the abuse which later was heaped upon all who had any concern on the side of assumption.

With almost no connection in Hamilton's financial measures, with only a secondary interest in foreign relations, apart from Morris's mission, there was one subject in which he showed a deep concern, the negotiations with the Indians. Here he was on familiar ground, for he had never lost his earlier liking for the problem, so intimately connected with the western lands and the growth of the settlements on the frontiers. He was certain that British intrigues hostile to the States were active among the tribes, and that the western posts were not surrendered because of their convenience and necessity in these intrigues for political influence and the fur trade. The first Congress provided for commissioners to attend a treaty between the southern Indians and the State of Georgia. The leader of the Creeks was Alexander McGillivray, whose influence had been thrown on the side of the British, and whose commercial activity since the peace had thrown the trade of the southern and western tribes into English hands. Georgia, fretting under the loss of profits looked upon as hers by right, had brought the matter before the Continental Congress, and

at the institution of the new government, was practically offering to McGillivray the option of war or a treaty.

The inevitable land question made a settlement of some difficulty, and not only was the internal peace of Georgia involved, but its attachment to the Union. To decide against the claims of the State to territory held or claimed by the Indians, would invite the hostility of the people, and to assert a right to lands clearly belonging to the Indians, would involve a long and costly war, with the possible interference and even participation of Spain and England. It was judicious, therefore, to select as commissioners men who were well known in public life, of respectable character, and of high estimation in the southern States, without being inhabitants of any of them. Benjamin Lincoln, of Massachusetts, Cyrus Griffin, of Virginia, and David Humphreys, of Connecticut, were the representatives of the States at the treaty, but even their disinterested efforts could not obtain what was most needed—the friendship of McGillivray. In no good humor over their failure, the commissioners charged the cause against McGillivray, and so reported to Washington. “For my part,” the President wrote to the Governor of South Carolina, “I am entirely persuaded, that the present general government will endeavor to lay the foundation for its proceedings in national faith, justice, and honor. But should the government, after having attempted in vain every reasonable pacific measure, be obliged to have recourse to arms for the defense of its citizens, I am also of opinion, that sound policy and good economy will point to a prompt and decisive effort, rather than to defensive and lingering operations ”

Laying the proceedings of the commissioners before Congress, Washington intimated that aggressive measures might become necessary, to afford protection to the frontier settlements, and punish the Indians. Realizing their own position, McGillivray and the head men of the Creeks came to New York, and there a treaty was made in time to be submitted to Congress before its adjournment. "This event," was Washington's comment, "will leave us in peace from one end of our borders to the other, except where it may be interrupted by a small refugee banditti of Cherokees and Shawnees, who can be easily chastised, or even extirpated, if it shall become necessary. But this will only be done in an inevitable extremity, since the basis of our proceedings with the Indian nations has been, and shall be, *justice* during the period in which I have any thing to do with the administration of this government."

When Congress adjourned in August, the President made a journey to Rhode Island, where he had intentionally not touched in his eastern tour, and afterwards went to Mount Vernon, to remain until the house at Philadelphia was ready for him, and Congress about to assemble. While resting he heard of the ill-ordered expedition sent out by St. Clair to punish the northern Indians, and in a sentence embodied the experience of years. "I expected *little* from the moment I heard he [Harmar, the commander] was a *drunkard* — I expected less as soon as I heard that on *this account* no confidence was reposed in him by the people of the Western Country. — And I gave up *all hope* of success, as soon as I heard that there were disputes with *him* about command."

While the problems of foreign relations were not new, for they had existed in 1783, at the time of the peace, the policy to be pursued was being slowly developed. The seizure by Spanish agents of an English vessel at Nootka Sound, on the west coast of America, on the ground of trespassing on Spanish territory, brought the two powers on the verge of war. Both were neighbors of the United States, and in the event of actual war there was every reason to expect that the neutrality, perhaps the assistance, of the States would be sought. In either event, much might be secured in the questions pending, and the prospect quickened the sense of the administration to the possibilities offered. The mere permission to allow British troops to march across the territory of the United States, from Canada to Florida, involved military features, but contained greater political results. If permission should be granted, could it not be given in exchange for a full settlement of the differences arising from the treaty of 1783? From Quebec came offers of a treaty of commerce, even of alliance, and of an exchange of ministers. Informal as were these offers, and the despatches from Morris in London showed how informal they were, they clearly pointed the inevitable tendency should war be declared. With Spain, on the other hand, the navigation of the Mississippi and a port at its mouth might be secured as the price of neutrality. Washington's opinion on the importance of securing the navigation had undergone a complete change, and he now felt that "we must have [it], and as certainly shall have as we remain a nation."

As participants in a war the States had little to gain,

and their neutrality meant much to them. It was their policy, Jefferson tersely put it, to feed and not to fight. Washington paraphrased the idea. "It seems to be our policy to keep in the situation, in which nature has placed us, to observe a strict neutrality, and to furnish others with those good things of subsistence, which they may want, and which our fertile land abundantly produces." To remain "unentangled in the crooked policies of Europe," was his wish, but he agreed with his Secretary of State that a proper balance of power should be maintained in America as in Europe. Neutral, the States would remain, but only if Great Britain would execute the treaty fairly and attempt no conquests adjoining the States. Although the incident ended in a peaceful settlement, it was important for bringing before Washington and his advisers the value of foreign complications in enabling the States to press what they desired to obtain. Morris in London and Beckwith in the United States, were feeling the sentiments of those in power towards an approach to closer relations; and Humphreys was sent to Madrid in a hopeless attempt to bring that court to a reasonable adjustment of the Mississippi question. With this accession of importance to foreign affairs came the seed of future complaint. Beckwith intimated that Morris was too confidential with the French representative in England, and Jefferson saw with increasing distrust the visits of this English agent to Hamilton.

On December 8th Washington again met Congress, and with felicitations on the happy situation of the country. The revenues were larger than had been anticipated, the credit of the nation had risen at home and

abroad, and the process of debt payment could be soon begun. Kentucky was about to knock to be admitted as a State, and the chastisement of a few Indians could not break the general impression of good relations with them. The war cloud was still visible in Europe, and threatened the peace and security of the United States. "It requires that we should not overlook the tendency of a war, and even the preparations for a war, among the nations most concerned in active commerce with this country, to abridge the means, and thereby at least enhance the price, of transporting its valuable productions to their proper markets." It would be expedient to encourage the navigation of the country, and so render the States less dependent on foreign vessels. These were the more important matters mentioned in the message, giving but little clue to what was to control the debates in Congress outside of commercial subjects.



CHAPTER X

PARTIES



HAMILTON'S reports gave occasion to long and bitter argument. During the recess Jefferson had visited Virginia and appreciated the spirit of opposition to Hamilton's financial operations prevailing in that State. Although a special concession in favor of Virginia had been made in the assumption plan, no concession could allay the intensity of criticism and defiance to the general idea of assuming the State debts which the so-called anti-Federalists had fomented. Proud of its size and its importance, Virginia believed her people had made extraordinary sacrifices during the war, for which some compensation was due from the general union. Conscious that her supremacy was being threatened, in fact had already been undermined, she sought to maintain a pre-eminence in politics. The bountiful crops of grain, which gave to the middle States a commercial standing higher than had yet been enjoyed, brought no prosperity to the tobacco planter and his much-exhausted lands. The manufactures which were appearing in New England

and the middle States could not exist in the southern, where slave labor blighted every venture but that of plantations, and confined even those to lines of production no longer prominent in foreign markets. With a system of cultivation that deliberately ruined the fertility of the fields, with a system of labor that could not be moved readily from place to place, or from one production to another, with no commercial interests that centre in cities or coast settlements, giving rise to navigation projects and a command of capital, the inhabitants of Virginia instinctively felt that they could not hold their own in the rising economy of the United States.

As a consequence, they disliked whatever tended to encourage these antipathetic movements. The shipping of the east was a menace to the commerce of the south. The manufactures of the north would batten on the suffering of the south, and suck the life-blood from their productive elements. The questioning of the Quakers on slavery was a threat against the most essential factor of the agriculture of the south. The funding of the debt, the creation of facilities, the establishment of stock markets, and the negotiation of foreign loans were most insidious and malignant methods of cheating the masses, preparing the way for a moneyed aristocracy, and of eventually destroying the liberties of the people. With no immediate opening for slave economy in the new development of the country, with no commercial, industrial, or financial possibilities within their reach, the Virginians took up the opposition in politics, and Jefferson assumed the leadership. The foundation of Virginian policy was economic; its methods were largely due to ignorance and a shrewd playing upon

the fears of a people already much wrought upon during the contest over the Constitution.

After the meeting of Congress, Jefferson noticed a change in the attitude of his associates. In reality the change, if any, was slight, and could not have been perceived if Jefferson had not wished to see it. The remembrances of Jefferson, recorded a quarter of a century after the event, lost much in accuracy but nothing in bitterness. They do, however, show to the full his inability to understand Hamilton's plans except from the political side, and in that aspect they were political monstrosities, pointing directly to monarchy. Two objects, said Jefferson, had Hamilton in mind: "1st. As a puzzle, to exclude popular understanding and inquiry. 2dly, as a machine for the corruption of the legislature; for he avowed the opinion that man could be governed by one of two motives only, force or interest: force, he observed, in this country, was out of the question; and the interests therefore of the members must be laid hold of, to keep the legislature in unison with the Executive." From this time Jefferson saw only corruption, stock-jobbing, and a thirst for monarchy in all that Hamilton planned. He was shocked at dinner-tables, where politics naturally formed the chief topic, to hear a preference expressed for kingly over republican government. He prided himself in being the only advocate of republican principle. He was still smarting over the success of Hamilton in making him hold the candle while the assumption and permanent residence questions were settled, and the "phalanx of the Treasury" became to him the army of opposition to good government, the Federalists of every color and description. It

was in this mood that Jefferson came to Philadelphia in November.

With such a believer in the power of his colleague in the Cabinet and Congress, and in the part played by corruption in securing and maintaining that power, Hamilton's plan of an excise and of a national bank was condemned from the start. Washington turned to his Attorney-General for advice on the latter proposition, and received an opinion that the measure was unconstitutional. In this view Jefferson coincided, and his carefully prepared paper, with that of Randolph, was sent to Hamilton by Washington. "The constitutionality of it is objected to," he wrote. "It therefore becomes more particularly my duty to examine the ground on which the objection is built." If he really entertained any objections of his own, or any reflected from Jefferson, they were reasoned away by Hamilton, and the success of the bank was a strong argument in its favor; so much so that even Jefferson advised his friend Short to invest his money in its stock.

Nor was it on domestic concerns only that this cleavage of parties became evident. Madison had long been anxious to discriminate against the products and shipping of Great Britain. The desire was a survival of the days of the Confederation, when the weakness of the States had enabled England to do as she wished in trade matters; and having a natural monopoly in profitable lines of commerce with the States, her ministry saw no good reason for making valuable concessions in return for privileges already enjoyed without price. To force England into a commercial treaty and to oblige her to give definite trading and shipping rights

in her West Indian colonies was Madison's idea, and to that extent might have been justified. Washington preferred to make an attempt to negotiate a commercial arrangement, and Morris was instructed on that point. This postponed the full application of a discrimination against British vessels and merchandise in the ports of the United States, but only until the results of Morris's mission could be known. Jefferson saw his opportunity to turn the matter into good political capital, and, seeing Hamilton's drift towards a recognition of England's commercial power and its availability for his revenue measures, took up the cause of France, and laid stress upon the expediency of favoring French trade in every possible way. The Federalists thus became the party for English trade and by degrees the favorers of England; while Jefferson's faction, soon to be the republican party, sympathized with French commerce and policy.

When France protested against collecting tonnage dues from French vessels under the tonnage law, although the protest would not stand in fact or in law, Jefferson wished to make a concession because of the value of the commercial interests at stake. This would be "waiving rigorous and nice discussions of right," and an "act of friendship and of compensation for favors received." He anxiously watched for the establishment of a government in France, as "necessary to stay up our own, and to prevent it from falling back to that kind of Half-way house, the English constitution." The complete neglect of the British ministry to meet the advances made through Morris gave Jefferson a telling instrument for pointing to the attitude of France,

though in fact France was giving nothing of real importance. He began to prepare the way for Madison's commercial policy, and, sending copies of the bill to the representatives of the United States in Europe, wished them to urge similar measures against England on the governments to which they were accredited.

To correct the tendency of the Federalist policy, Jefferson would enlarge the membership of the lower House, so as to obtain a more agricultural representation, which should put that interest above that of the stock-jobbers. He sought to influence the course of Kentucky, now to be a State in the Union, urging the election of pure Republicans to Congress. As yet Washington did not come in for his criticism: "It is fortunate that our first executive magistrate is purely and zealously republican," he wrote to Innes. To another correspondent he said, "The prudence of the President is an anchor of safety to us." Washington himself sighed for retirement, and saw with pain the rise of sectional feeling. "In some few instances, particularly in passing the law for higher duties mentioned above, and more especially on the subject of the bank, the line between the southern and eastern interests appeared more strongly marked than could have been wished."

Congress rose on March 4th, and soon after Washington began a tour of the southern States, thus completing the idea he had formed when first inaugurated. Stopping at Georgetown, he was instrumental in securing an agreement of conflicting interests, which assured the location of the capital; and after a short stay at Mount Vernon set out for his journey of nearly nineteen

hundred miles. This was accomplished without any interruption by sickness, bad weather, or any untoward accident, and enabled him to learn the disposition of the people more accurately than he could have done by any information. In Virginia, he found the opposition against assumption strong, but learned there and elsewhere that the excise law, severely resented as it had been, would be executed without difficulty. "It is possible, however, and not improbable, that some demagogue may start up, and produce and get signed some resolutions declaratory of their disapprobation of the measure." Upon the whole the new government was gaining strength and confidence, and, he naïvely added, "in some instances they even impute to the government what is due only to the goodness of Providence." This meant the rise of a party willing to claim more than its due.

In the absence of the President, Jefferson wrote him frequently and in a friendly manner. This did not hinder his political activity, and knowing the power of the press he sought to introduce a republican paper. Fenno's *Gazette* was "a paper of pure Toryism, disseminating the doctrines of monarchy, aristocracy, and the exclusion of the influence of the people." Bache, the son-in-law of Franklin, published a republican sheet which had only a limited circulation. Jefferson's idea was to have a weekly or half-weekly paper, without advertisements, that would go into the rural districts of the States and furnish "a Whig vehicle of intelligence." Under inducements offered by Jefferson and his friends, Philip Freneau, a poet and journalist, came to Philadelphia to undertake the issue of a republican paper,

known as the *National Gazette*, and was appointed translator in the Department of State. The publication of Paine's *Rights of Man*, with an injudicious note from Jefferson to the printer, giving it praise as being directed against certain political heresies current in the United States, was too pointed a slur on John Adams to escape attention. However innocent the Secretary of State may have been in intention, he certainly could not have chosen a more apt time to introduce a matter certain to give point to the divisions of party.

In October the second Congress met, and Washington could lay before it a good account of the country, its prosperity and high credit, its peace and ready acceptance of the excise. Not a word on foreign relations did the message contain, and the most important recommendation concerned the Indians. Treaties had been made with the friendly and the wavering, and an expedition of Kentucky militia, under St. Clair, was punishing the hostile. His policy towards the tribes under the immediate protection of the United States was enlightened, and based upon the results of his wide experience. "They should experience the benefits of an impartial dispensation of justice ; the mode of alienating their lands, the main source of discontent and war, should be so defined and regulated as to obviate imposition, and, as far as may be practicable, controversy concerning the reality and extent of the alienations which are made ; commerce with them should be promoted under regulations tending to secure an equitable deportment towards them, and such rational experiments should be made for imparting to them the blessings of civilization, as may from time to time suit their

condition ; the executive of the United States should be enabled to employ the means, to which the Indians have long been accustomed, for uniting their immediate interests with the preservation of peace ; and efficacious provision should be made for inflicting adequate penalties upon all those, who, by violating their rights, shall infringe the treaties and endanger the peace of the Union. A system corresponding with the mild principles of religion and philanthropy towards an unenlightened race of men, whose happiness materially depends on the conduct of the United States, would be as honorable to the national character as conformable to the dictates of sound policy."

This program gained point by the crushing defeat of St. Clair's force by the Indians, on November 4th. The news did not reach Philadelphia until December 8th, more than a month after the event, and was "with much concern" officially communicated to Congress. "Although the national loss is considerable according to the scale of the event, yet it may be repaired without great difficulty, excepting as to the brave men who have fallen on the occasion, and who are a subject of public as well as private regret." The causes of the defeat were made the subject of a congressional investigation, but Washington could not approve of what St. Clair had done, or, rather, left undone, and believed neglect of due precautions had been shown. The difficult matter of selecting a successor fell upon the President alone, and he admitted he was never more embarrassed in any appointment. Knowing the records of most of the men available, he also knew the claims of rank, and the best men were not always holding the highest commissions.

Wayne was taken, and proved his fitness and the wisdom of the choice.

With so much to be thankful for at home, the troubles of France absorbed attention by contrast, as well as by reason of their affecting a country to whom the United States owed so much. Through Lafayette and Luzerne Washington received direct intelligence of transactions, and in Gouverneur Morris he had an almost ideal reporter, cool, quick to digest, and possessing humor approaching wit. Even with these sources of information, and the items in the gazettes, it was difficult to follow the rapid progress of events, and he suffered many weeks of anxiety for the safety of his friends in that country. The acceptance by the king of the constitution, so meaningless an act in the result, was of good portent in the eyes of Washington, involving happy consequences to France and to the world.

Although foreign relations formed no part of the message to Congress, they became all-important by the progress of events. During the summer, France had rescinded the privileges accorded in her ports to whale oil and tobacco from the United States, and imposed new conditions upon American shipping. Great Britain had also made her navigation law more stringent, so as to discourage the importation of corn in American ships, and Spain had come to much the same resolution. In place of uniting with America against England, these countries adopted navigation laws quite as injurious as the British to the shipping of the States. France had sent a minister to America, Jean Baptiste Ternant, already known for his services in the American army; and in November, George Hammond presented

his credentials as His Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. No obstacle remained to filling the diplomatic positions in the service of the United States, and Washington sent to the Senate the nominations of Thomas Pinckney for London, Gouverneur Morris for Paris, and William Short for The Hague. Before they could be confirmed, the question of a commercial treaty with France had been framed in the Cabinet; the British minister had been asked concerning the western posts and a treaty of commerce; and the representative of Spain gave notice that his master would negotiate at Madrid for a port of deposit at the mouth of the Mississippi.

The diplomatic nominations were sent in on December 22d, and were at once antagonized, the motion, as adopted, stating that the Senate did not possess sufficient evidence to convince them that it would be for the interest of the United States to appoint Ministers Plenipotentiary to reside permanently at foreign courts. The correctness of this position was open to doubt, for the Constitution seemed to give to the Senate only the right to give or withhold their consent to the person nominated. The real difficulty became known when a committee reported in favor of an appointment to London and The Hague, omitting all mention of that to Paris. The opposition became more defined when, on Pinckney's being named for the London mission, action was postponed. To undertake to pass upon the expediency of foreign missions, as well as upon the persons to be appointed, was a stretch of power not warranted on any ground, and the controversy was soon reduced to the names submitted. Against Short there

were no complaints, and Pinckney's fitness was beyond question on the ground of abilities. It was, at this time or soon after, hinted that his English education might interfere with the full exercise of his judgment, a charge too frivolous to be used save as a last resort. Over Morris the battle was fierce. In perfect candor Washington gave him the causes of the opposition, so far as they had come to his knowledge. They resolved themselves into charges of levity and imprudence of conversation and conduct ; of being a favorer of aristocracy and unfriendly to the Revolution in France ; and of having indiscreetly communicated to the representative of France the object of his mission to London. " By reciting them," Washington continued, " I give you a proof of my friendship, if I give none of my policy or judgment. I do it on the presumption, that a mind, conscious of its own rectitude, fears not what is said of it, but will bid defiance to and despise shafts, that are not barbed with accusations against honor or integrity."

Jefferson had not dared to oppose the appointment of Morris, but he had a share in upholding it in the Senate, and as soon as the nomination was confirmed he pointed out how the mission could be withdrawn when the next appropriation for its maintenance should be laid before Congress. He disliked Morris for past acts, but he distrusted him the more for his present influence with the President. It was to the letters of Morris that the growing distrust of the French Revolution in the mind of the President was due. Washington had shown an interest in the movements of the people in France, and had devoutly hoped for an end favorable to that country and to the rights of man. It

could not escape him, however, that the flight and capture of the king involved serious consequences. He was touched in receiving from that unhappy monarch a message, sent through Morris, that he might be obliged by the present madness to make advances to Great Britain, but he wished it to be known it would not be done with any intention of deserting his allies, the United States, or done willingly; quite the contrary.

The division of opinion between Hamilton and Jefferson must have been perceived by Washington before the end of 1791. Certainly the establishment of Freneau's paper made him conscious of it, and of the fact that he was looked upon as a cover for designs that were regarded as unconstitutional and unrepugnant. Jefferson did not hesitate to tell him of the enormous influence of the Treasury department, already sufficient, in his belief, to swallow up the whole executive powers; and he urged the necessity of placing matters on a safe footing, as otherwise future Presidents would not be able to make head against that department. The conference called out a personal statement from Washington of his earnest wish to retire, lest it should be said that having tasted the sweets of office he could not do without them. He added that he really felt he was growing old, his bodily health less firm, his memory, always bad, becoming worse, and perhaps the other faculties of his mind showed a decay to others, of which he was insensible himself. Public business was, as a result, irksome, and tranquillity and retirement had become an irresistible passion. He gently intimated that the Secretary of State was a more important officer of

the government than the Secretary of the Treasury, and spoke with anxiety of the symptoms of dissatisfaction among the people.

Jefferson was not backward in laying all the responsibility for this unrest to the Treasury department, which had infected the people with a species of gambling destructive of morality, and had introduced this poison into the government itself. That this dishonesty was rife in Congress he felt assured, and he was quite as certain that the last measure of this party, one that would decide whether the government was one of limited or of unlimited powers, was now before the legislature. In Hamilton's report on manufactures he saw a claim which, if granted, would end in giving all powers to the central government. For under color of giving bounties for the encouragement of particular manufactures, the report meant to establish the doctrine that the power given by the Constitution to collect taxes to provide for the general welfare of the United States permitted Congress to take everything under their management which it should deem for the public welfare. In making this assertion, Jefferson could hardly have been aware of a proposition made by Washington to Hamilton, to include in his message to Congress a recommendation to encourage the cultivation of hemp and cotton in the United States, the most effectual means being a bounty. He had doubts whether such bounties came within the powers of the general government, or whether the temper of the times would permit the expenditure of money for this purpose, and the matter was dropped.

Jefferson's fears produced some effect upon the

President, and the consideration of such a problem as was contained in the apportionment bill under the first census, calling out the first exercise of the veto power, not only wearied but puzzled him. To accept the measure as it came to him would range him with the Federalists ; to veto it, would place him with the southern party. The widening of faction, based as it was upon sectional differences, as the vote on this bill had been strictly geographical, disturbed him. He even expressed the view that a separation of the Union would occur ere long, and towards that catastrophe the public mind seemed to be tending.

So fixed was this intention to retire that he had consulted his Cabinet as to the proper time and mode for announcing it. Hamilton and Knox were much opposed to his taking the step, and Jefferson also suggested reasons for not following his wish. Unconvinced by their arguments, he went to Madison, of whose judgment he had a high opinion, and in matters of a more personal nature as much trusted as Hamilton. The approaching session of Congress appeared to Washington a fitting occasion for announcing his intention, but, besides the lateness of the day, the election occurring in November, he was apprehensive that Congress might address him in such a way as to entangle him in further explanations. He did not wish to give an impression of arrogantly presuming on his re-election in case he should not retire, yet he desired to leave no room for mistaking his intention. Pleading his deficiency in many of the essential qualifications for his office, and his unfitness to judge of legal questions and questions arising out of the Constitution, he asserted he would rather go to his farm, take

his spade in hand, and work for his bread, than remain in his present position.

Madison opposed his retiring from office. With the aid of official opinions and advice he was as competent as any man to pass upon matters of state, and in the great point of conciliating and uniting all parties under a government which had excited such violent controversies and divisions no other man could approach him in usefulness. The spirit of party should be considered as an argument for his remaining at his post until the public opinion, the character of the government, and the course of its administration had been better decided. There was no party in existence opposed to the Constitution, and that which was monarchical in tendency was opposed to the public sentiment, and, under a wise and temperate administration, would not long retain a dangerous influence. No one but himself could exert such a power; and while his retirement might not be fatal to the public good, yet in the present unsettled condition of the young government a postponement of it was another sacrifice exacted by his patriotism. A few days later, Madison suggested as the proper mode a direct address of notification to the public, to be issued in time for its proper effect on the election.

Congress adjourned, and Washington at Mount Vernon prepared the outline of his proposed address of farewell to the public. The general idea was not dissimilar to that of his public letter to the States on leaving the army,—gratitude for the honor and confidence shown, and an invocation that Providence might continue to bless the country, the supporters of its

interests, and the promoters of harmony, order, and good government. "That to impress these things it might among other things be observed, that we are *all* the children of the same country, a country great and rich in itself, capable and promising to be, as prosperous and as happy as any the annals of history have ever brought to our view. That our interest, however diversified in local and smaller matters, is the same in all the great and essential concerns of the nation. That the extent of our country, the diversity of our climate and soil, and the various productions of the States consequent of both, are such as to make one part not only convenient, but perhaps indispensably necessary to the other part; and may render the whole (at no distant period) one of the most independent in the world. That the established government being the work of our own hands, with the seeds of amendment engrafted in the Constitution, may by wisdom, good dispositions, and mutual allowances, aided by experience, bring it as near to perfection as any human institution ever approximated; and therefore, the only strife among us ought to be, who should be foremost in facilitating and finally accomplishing such great and desirable objects; by giving every possible support, and cement to the Union. That however necessary it may be to keep a watchful eye over public servants, and public measures, yet there ought to be limits to it; for suspicions unfounded, and jealousies too lively, are irritating to honest feeling; and oftentimes are productive of more evil than good."

The outline marked a stage in the development of Washington's policy, for no reference was made to

foreign affairs. It was domestic faction and division which seemed to him so important as to monopolize his attention, and against which his most solemn warnings were to be directed. Yet Hamilton's success in carrying his financial policy to an issue had for the time removed the great point of difference. No one seriously proposed to undo his work, and the objections, that his course was monarchical, and the right of the legislature to bind posterity was doubtful, were too sublimated and transcendental to become living issues. Washington assumed that a neutral and pacific policy was not to be questioned, and therefore saw no reason for adverting to it as giving occasion for any difference of opinion. Hamilton, with more sensitive political insight, knew of Jefferson's "womanish attachment to France and womanish resentment against Great Britain"; but, with wiser prescience, stood on the same plane as Washington, believing that, on the whole, "the only enemy which republicanism has to fear in this country is in the spirit of faction and anarchy."

Hamilton's influence with Washington was strong, but might be undermined. With this in view, Jefferson, in May, prepared a full statement of what he held to be the causes of the public uneasiness, causes in which, he asserted, Washington was in no way personally mixed. Monarchical views, corruption of the people and of the legislature, a disposition to explain away the limited powers of the Constitution in order to change it, a dissolution of the Union, and the introduction of King, Lords, and Commons were the dangers, and the remedy lay in the increased representation, if it be, of federal-republicans—that is, in Jefferson's own

John Jay.

From the painting by John Trumbull in the City Hall, New York.



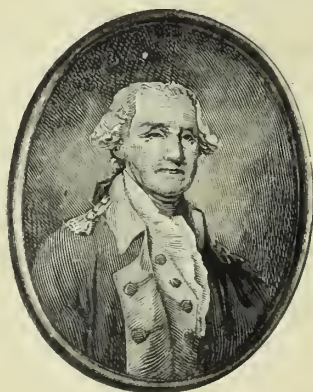
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following, now known under that name,—and in Washington's remaining in the presidency. "The confidence of the whole union is centred in you. Your being at the helm will be more than an answer to every argument which can be used to alarm and lead the people in any quarter into violence or secession. North and South will hang together, if they have you to hang on." To these considerations were added weighty motives from the situation of foreign affairs. "I think it probable that both the Spanish and English negotiations, if not completed before your purpose is known, will be suspended from the moment it is known."

Almost while this letter was being penned, Washington assured Madison that only a conviction his retirement would lead to a disputed succession could induce him to relinquish the determination he had formed. Jefferson's long list of errors to be explained away or corrected excited new hesitation in Washington's breast, and he turned it over to Hamilton that he might know the other side. On receiving this full reply, an able presentation, to convince all who should study it, Washington wrote to both Secretaries, urging a cessation of dissension. Without more charity for the opinions and acts of one another in governmental matters, was his plea, or some infallible criterion by which the truth of speculative opinions, before they had undergone the test of experience, are to be prejudged, it would be difficult, if not impracticable, to manage the reins of government. "I would fain hope that liberal allowances will be made for the political opinions of each other; and instead of those wounding suspicions and irritating charges, with which some of our gazettes

are so strongly impregnated, and cannot fail, if persevered in, of pushing matters to extremity, and thereby to tear the machine asunder, that there might be mutual forbearances and temporizing yieldings *on all sides*."

Hamilton, though believing himself to be the deeply injured party, gave a promise of embracing any opportunity for healing or terminating the differences which existed. Admitting he had been obliged to make some retaliation for the criticism and abuse poured out upon him, he most anxiously wished, "as far as may depend upon me, to smooth the path of your administration, and to render it prosperous and happy." If an agreement of co-operation could not be reached, it would be well to make other appointments in the places of the differing members. Jefferson, after rehearsing his charges against Hamilton and defending his own position, announced his determination of retiring, and expressed the hope that it would not be necessary for him to enter into controversies until he had become a private citizen, when he could appeal to the country. Nor should he do so then, unless for his own justification.



CHAPTER XI

GENET



INCREASING expenditures made necessary new taxes. The excise had been imposed mainly to obtain the revenue needed for protecting the frontiers. It was, therefore, with some surprise that the administration learned of open resistance to the excise officers in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Hamilton, in the absence of the President, took measures to secure evidence of the Pittsburgh disturbances, and notified Washington, who approved what had been done. "If opposition is still given to the due execution of the law," he added, "I have no hesitation in declaring, if the evidence of it is clear and unequivocal, that I shall, however reluctantly I exercise them, exert all the legal powers with which the executive is invested to check so daring and unwarrantable a spirit. It is my duty to see the laws executed. To permit them to be trampled upon with impunity would be repugnant to it; nor can the government longer remain a passive spectator of the contempt with which they are treated." On receiving this notice, Hamilton, consulting with Knox and Randolph, prepared a

proclamation for the President's signature, and sent it to Mount Vernon, before submitting it to Jefferson, then in Virginia. With scrupulous regard for what was decent, Washington thought it best not to depart from precedent, and sent it by express to Jefferson for his signature. He recognized, also, that the measure would give rise to severe strictures. "Not only the Constitution and laws must strictly govern, but the employing of the regular troops avoided, if it be possible to effect order without their aid ; otherwise there would be a cry at once, 'The cat is let out ; we now see for what purpose an army was raised.'"

On November 6th Washington read clearly and distinctly, but without any attempt at elocution, his message to Congress. It was no longer an unbroken hymn of prosperity and public content that he could sound. The Indian disturbances still continued, and gave little prospect of an early determination ; the revenues were sufficient for all purposes, but the opposition to the excise law made it less profitable than a full collection would ensure ; a revision of the judiciary system was expedient, and provision should be made for the regular redemption and discharge of the public debt. The success in placing three loans in Holland pointed to high credit, and a saving could be effected by paying the loan made for the Bank of the United States. The careful cultivation of harmony, combined with a due regard to stability in the public councils, was enjoined, as tending to strengthen and confirm the attachment of the people to the Constitution.

The references to foreign matters were still general and were now influenced by the fact that negotiations

were pending. The revolution in France had gone so far in disturbing the councils of that nation as to preclude any arrangements, commercial or political, of a new character. Jefferson had given to Hammond a full and able presentation of the matters in dispute between the United States and Great Britain, and nothing further could be done until instructions had been received from London. Spain had stationed an agent among the southern Indians, and incited them to interfere with the running of the boundary line established by the treaty with the Creeks. It was charged that Carondelet, the Governor of New Orleans, had supplied the tribes with arms and ammunition, and did not hesitate to stir the Indians to war. The message contained nothing which could point to France or Great Britain; while a general phrase indicated a possible difference with Spain. "I particularly recommend to your consideration the means of preventing those aggressions by our citizens on the territory of other nations, and other infractions of the law of nations, which, furnishing just subject of complaint, might endanger our peace with them."

This attitude of Spain had given rise to some discussion in the Cabinet. That Hamilton and Jefferson differed radically in their conception of the true foreign policy of the United States was well known to Washington. In his defense Jefferson had stated the difference: "My system was to give some satisfactory distinctions to France, of little cost to us, in return for the solid advantages yielded to us by them; and to have met the English with some restrictions which might induce them to abate their severities against our

commerce." He believed these views coincided with those held by Washington, although it would have been difficult to show what concessions of value had been made by France. Certainly nothing of them remained, and the confusions in that country cut off all hope of negotiations. In this situation Jefferson wished to leave to Congress the question of declaring war against the Indians, and, presumably through that act, arriving at war with Spain. Hamilton advised an alliance with England, while postponing war as far as possible. Randolph suggested the unpopularity of such an act, especially if, in the event of war, Great Britain should send troops to America. The President settled the question against Hamilton, saying the remedy would be worse than the disease. This was not the act of a blind partisan in favor of England, and the charge came with little grace from Jefferson, whose interest it was to forget this decision and dwell upon the concessions Hamilton wished to make to secure freedom from French entanglement.

Before December, Washington's doubts as to retiring had been solved, and, greatly against his own wishes, he was persuaded to remain in the presidency. As to his election there was never a shadow of doubt, and the votes were unanimous for him. As a counterweight in policy it was thought by some that Adams should be set aside, and a federal-republican placed over the Senate. The man most seriously considered was George Clinton, who had been elected Governor of New York under conditions which made even Jefferson assert that he should not take the office. Second in place was Aaron Burr, whose eagerness for advancement permitted

him to make his own canvass, and whose character ranged against him so different thinkers as Monroe and Hamilton. A better judgment prevailed, and Adams received seventy-seven of the one hundred and thirty-two votes cast. Washington was naturally pleased with the unanimity of his election. "A mind must be insensible indeed, not to be gratefully impressed by so distinguished and honorable a testimony of public approbation and confidence; and as I suffered my name to be contemplated on this occasion, it is more than probable that I should, for a moment, have experienced chagrin, if my re-election had not been by a pretty respectable vote."

The oath of office was administered in the Senate chamber, in the presence of the heads of departments, foreign representatives, and such of the members of Congress as were in the city. His words were few and were confined to an expression of gratitude for his re-election, and of regard for its responsibilities. "Previous to the execution of any official act of the President, the Constitution requires an oath of office. This oath I am now about to take and in your presence; that, if it shall be found during my administration of the government, I have in any instance violated willingly or knowingly the injunction thereof, I may, besides incurring constitutional punishment, be subject to the upbraidings of all who are now witnesses of the present solemn ceremony."

On December 14th, a rumor was current that the armies of the allies had been driven back by France, and general rejoicing followed among all who were grateful to that country for what she had done for the

United States. In this period of celebration, Washington intimated to Jefferson that he wished for a stricter connection with France, and gave as his opinion that no other country of Europe could be relied upon at all times. He went so far as to say that "he considered France as the sheet anchor of this country, and its friendship as a first object." Coming so soon after the defense by Hamilton of an alliance with Great Britain, this stand of the President gave great confidence and exhilaration to Jefferson. He believed a people could establish what form of government they pleased, and change it as they pleased. The will of the nation was the only essential. When Washington permitted such expressions to be written officially to Morris, he seemed to have fully endorsed the policy of his Secretary of State. He even departed from his usual course, and, commenting upon the sharp language used by Short against the Jacobins, intimated that such conduct could not but be displeasing to France. Shortly after this interview, formal notice was given through the French representative, Ternant, of the hostility of the Assembly to Morris as well as to Short, and Washington entertained a wish that Jefferson should go to France, a wish in no respect acceptable to the Secretary. The approaching arrival of Genet from France, having full powers, it was believed, to give to the United States the desired commercial privileges in France and the French West Indies, was a good excuse for not undertaking to open negotiations in Paris.

The favor shown to Jefferson encouraged him to persist in an attempt to discredit Hamilton. A part of the moneys raised in Holland, and intended to be

used in Europe in paying off debt, had been brought to the United States and lodged in the bank. There was a technical violation of law in this act, for the law expressly designated the purpose of the loan, the object to which its proceeds should be devoted. Preparing a set of resolutions expressive of the illegality, Jefferson laid them before Congress through William B. Giles, a representative of Virginia, and they became known as the Giles resolutions. Hamilton had already made a full statement of the loans and their disbursement, so Congress had all the information needed to convict him of maladministration. Giles, pressing his resolutions to an issue, met with a defeat. Hamilton knew whence the attack had come, and was not sparing of aggressive retort. In place of mutual yielding and harmony, the two men were more widely apart than before, and Washington seemed to be leaning toward the Jefferson side, when a series of events completely changed the course of his policy, as expressed to Jefferson.

The death of the King and Queen of France was the turning-point. Only in February had Hamilton admitted that the popular tide in America was strong in favor of the latest revolution in France—the declaration of a republic,—and in that Washington heartily agreed. To aid France by paying the debt in provisions for the West Indies, to cultivate her friendship and commerce by special efforts and concessions, and to further the establishment of a true republic by recognizing the government,—these were the objects to be pursued under the willing direction and warm sympathy of Jefferson. The death of the monarchs called a halt,

for it shocked the Federalists. The federal-republicans found an excuse for the act. The man, they pitied ; the King was a traitor, and, being one, should be punished as any other man. Washington maintained silence in his letters, and, anxious to avoid any cause for complaint, refused to receive the Vicomte de Noailles in any but a private capacity, and refrained from giving a parting message to Ternant, although both these men had served with him in the Revolution.

Meanwhile, the vessel that was bringing the new minister from France was approaching America. England had declared war against the French people, and Holland was involved. Hamilton raised the question whether the new minister should be received absolutely or with qualifications. The death of the King gave occasion to a regent, and if a minister from him should also come, should he be recognized ? The idea was to remain perfectly neutral, and he would carry the policy further, so as to be entirely neutral as regards France and Great Britain. The President, now at Mount Vernon, sounded the same note, as he had been informed that vessels were already designated privateers. He set out at once for Philadelphia, and after consulting with Hamilton he summoned his Cabinet to form a general plan of conduct for the executive. It was decided to issue a proclamation forbidding the citizens to take part in any hostilities on the seas with or against any of the belligerent powers, warning them against carrying to such nations any of those articles deemed contraband according to the modern usage of nations, and enjoining them from all acts and proceedings inconsistent with the duties of a friendly nation towards those

at war. The French minister was to be received. It was evident that Hamilton was once more the ruling spirit. The proclamation was issued on April 22d, and a few days later Hamilton issued his letter instructing the customs officers at the ports to be alert in preventing infractions of neutrality. Jefferson thought the proclamation a pusillanimous one, and believed Hamilton wished to create a following of spies and informers. The power given to the Treasury was, in his view, a most dangerous one, and would be wielded by a dangerous and ambitious man.

Genet landed at Charleston, South Carolina, and at once made all preparations to prey upon English commerce. Privateers were fitted out, commissions issued, and the French consuls given powers to judge prizes. The frigate that brought Genet to America sailed for Philadelphia, taking many English merchantmen, and, among others, one in American waters. The vessels sent out by Genet soon began to send in captures, which were promptly condemned by the consuls. Preferring to go to Philadelphia by land, the French representative had met with ovations wherever he had passed, and reached the seat of government intoxicated by his success and reception. Nearly three weeks before his coming, Jefferson had expressed the hope that the people would testify their affection without respect to the cold caution of the government, and the hope was royally fulfilled. He also feared that a fair neutrality, though necessary to keep from war, would "prove a disagreeable pill to our friends"; but Genet refused to recognize neutrality. Two weeks before he reached Philadelphia, the British minister had entered a protest

against the captures by French vessels, and on his triumphal reception at the capital, he found the welcome of Washington cold, and delivered in strange surroundings, with some of the trappings of the overthrown monarchy. His letters of credence and instruction delighted Jefferson. "He offers every thing, and asks nothing," and the purport of his mission was described as nothing but affectionate and magnanimous.

His conduct was, unfortunately, as much opposed to the interests of France as to those of the United States. With no conception of the constitution of government, with little knowledge of international law, and with an overweening sense of his own importance and influence, he refused to be guided by the advice of those who wished him well. The acts of his agents had injured him before his credentials were delivered; his own acts, in continuation, reduced him to the position of a plotting mischief-maker, possessing neither the dignity of his office nor the ability to plot successfully. Overwrought by the reception accorded to him by the people, and imbued with the revolutionary spirit he had seen in France, he placed feeling above reason, and hoped to sweep the United States into a full and complete recognition of his country and its wars. Neutrality was to serve as a cloak to active assistance, and in Jefferson he found an all-too-sympathetic listener. Genet might be made into an instrument for overthrowing the "monocrats," and Freneau, recognizing the cue given, turned his abuse upon the President. Ever a sensitive man to public opinion, Washington winced under the attacks, and hinted to Jefferson that he could make them to cease. For his own purposes, the Secretary

of State would place no bridle on his underling, and, fully conscious of the unrest he was giving his chief, he still looked upon Freneau as a means of discrediting the acts of government. With hostile and foreign critics like the English, French, and Spanish representatives already in action, Jefferson was entirely willing to add a domestic and not very scrupulous carper to the number, one who would not hesitate to attack Washington.

Genet was encouraged by Freneau's open adhesion to France, and by Jefferson's known leaning to the same side. When remonstrated with on the acts of his privateers, he cited the treaty ; when urged to be moderate and within the law, he preached the theories of the Jacobins, and believed Jefferson to be a Jacobin at heart. When it was pointed out to him that his seizures were clearly illegal and must be restored, he snapped his fingers at the authorities, and counted upon the popularity of his cause. When he was requested by the Governor of Pennsylvania, and by Jefferson himself, not to permit one of his armed vessels to leave the port, he seemingly acquiesced, but saw to it that the vessel should sail. Remonstrance produced a threat of an appeal to the people, and when the threat was repeated to Washington he saw at once it was a question of authority, and for the dignity of the country that authority must be asserted.

The proclamation of neutrality was very grateful to the commercial element of the population, and from many cities came addresses expressing confidence in the government and an endorsement of its policy. However much the general feeling was in favor of the principles of the French revolution, there was as general a

feeling that the United States must not be drawn into the European war, if it could possibly be avoided. The admirers of Genet might hold mass-meetings, prepare addresses, accept commissions, and reflect this ardent and somewhat explosive temper ; they could not effect what was necessary to involve the government in their policy. Every day that passed proved the wisdom of enforcing the proclamation, for Genet seemed studiously intent upon destroying his own standing by employing methods that were neither legitimate nor quite sane. In attacking Washington he gained nothing ; in antagonizing Jefferson he lost his main support ; and in entering upon newspaper controversies, and appealing to a public already cold to his approaches, and puzzled, if not disgusted, by his conduct, he gave the administration full cause to take the extreme but final step of demanding his recall.

What made it the more difficult to take this step was the unsatisfactory situation of the United States as regarded other nations. Great Britain had neither asked that the United States should remain neutral, nor had yielded one iota of her pretensions on land or sea. The western posts were still in the possession of her troops, her West Indian trade was still closed to American vessels, she made no advances for a commercial treaty or agreement, and still exercised the alleged right of impressing seamen from American ships. The case of the United States against her claims and position, so ably stated by Jefferson, had remained unanswered for more than a year, and even Washington's patience was tried by the delay. The injuries committed on English commerce in American waters had

Mrs. John Adams. (Upper left) from the painting by Gilbert Stuart
owned by Brooks Adams, Esq., Quincy, Mass.

Mrs. Robert Morris. (Upper right) from the painting by Gilbert Stuart
at the Lenox Library, New York.

Mrs. James Madison. (Centre) from the drawing by T. C. Liebbers
owned by Mrs. J. D. McGuire, Ellicott City, Md.

Mrs. Elias Boudinot. (Lower left) from the painting by C. W. Peale
owned by Miss J. J. Boudinot, New York.

Mrs. Alexander Hamilton. (Lower right) from the painting by
Ralph Earle owned by Philip Schuyler, Esq., Tarrytown, N. Y.



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met with prompt attention, and full reparation made where the facts called for it ; yet Pinckney, in London, met with little encouragement in his protests and memorials, and the orders relating to American ships loaded with grain were anything but conciliatory. Under these conditions many thought an insult had been offered to France by the neutrality rule, and a great concession made to Great Britain without adequate cause or any compensation whatever.

Nor was Great Britain the only nation to be considered. Spain had shown no disposition to come to an understanding on the many questions raised by her position and conduct at New Orleans. It was still a closed port, and American produce was heavily fined for coming there, while every obstacle, short of force, was thrown in the way of a Mississippi trade. Genet had designs upon this Spanish port, and sent agents to Kentucky to prepare an expedition against it, for Genet was a man of vivid imagination, and dabbled in great enterprises. The Spanish agents protested to Jefferson, but forgot to mention the malconduct of Spain's representatives at New Orleans, who had sought to stir the Indians to war against the United States, who had offered a refuge to fugitives, slaves as well as criminals, and who were, by their needlessly harassing regulations, fretting the population of the Ohio Valley into a spirit of revolt, making it open to suggestions from Genet's agents or any adventurer who promised plunder. A war with the Creeks was looked upon almost as a certainty ; and such a war would mean one with Spain. To this every circumstance pointed, and so evident was the determination of that country to pick a quarrel with the United

States, that the Cabinet were without division in expectation of the result.

The rapid succession of protests from Genet and Hammond brought many problems before Washington and his advisers, and gave many opportunities for intensifying the differences of political methods. Hamilton was looked upon as the representative of England in the Cabinet, and every sentence he wrote or uttered, which could bear it, was twisted into an argument for British claims. His known intimacy with Hammond lent color to this interpretation, and to the suspicious mind of Jefferson he was culpably partisan. Knox counted for little, for he was regarded as a satellite of Hamilton; and of late Randolph had been put in the same class. Thus the Secretary of State considered himself as standing alone, and as battling against abhorrent forces without any aid but the dictates of his own conscience. Washington had deserted him, and in the Cabinet meetings either remained silent, or gave the weight of his opinion to the measures proposed by Hamilton. No allowance was made for the fact that the President always listened to what Jefferson had to say, and on many occasions laid before him for his opinion matters with which he had no concern, unless to see in them new material for maligning Hamilton and the monarchs. No allowance was made for the evident mental and physical unrest of Washington, burdened with questions on which his advisers were divided, and conscious of the unfriendly criticisms and almost libellous abuse fed and fostered by the Secretary of State. No longer on terms of intimacy with Madison, no longer having it in his power to ask for counsel

from Mason, who was dead, Lee, Henry, or Harrison, he stood even more alone than Jefferson.

“That there are in this, as well as in all other countries,” he wrote to Henry Lee, “discontented characters, I well know; as also that those characters are actuated by very different views; some good, from an opinion that the measures of the general government are impure; some bad, and if I might be allowed to use so harsh an expression, diabolical, inasmuch as they are not only meant to impede the measures of that government generally, but more especially, (as a great mean towards the accomplishment of it,) to destroy the confidence which it is necessary for the people to place, (until they have unequivocal proof of demerit,) in their public servants. For in this light I consider myself, whilst I am an occupant of office; and, if they were to go further and call me their slave, during this period, I would not dispute the point.

“But in what will this abuse terminate? The result, as it respects myself, I care not; for I have a consolation within, that no earthly efforts can deprive me of, and that is, that neither ambitions nor interested motives have influenced my conduct. The arrows of malevolence, therefore, however barbed and well pointed, never can reach the most vulnerable part of me; though, whilst I am *up* as a *mark*, they will be continually aimed. The publications in Freneau’s and Bache’s papers are outrages on common decency; and they progress in that style, in proportion as their pieces are treated with contempt, and are passed by in silence, by those at whom they are aimed. The tendency of them, however, is too obvious to be mistaken by men of cool

and dispassionate minds, and, in my opinion, ought to alarm them; because it is difficult to prescribe bounds to the effect."

On the morning of August 1st, and at the President's house the Cabinet entered upon an examination of Genet's letters, to determine what should be done with him. For two days the sessions were held, and Jefferson has left an outline sketch of what was proposed. All present were agreed that a full statement of Genet's conduct should be sent to Morris, to be laid before the executive council of France, and his recall required. Jefferson did not wish to have a copy of this statement given to Genet, lest it should make him extremely active in his plans and endanger confusion. Washington thought otherwise and carried his point. Hamilton proposed the publication of the whole correspondence, as an appeal to the people, and Washington was inclined to adopt the idea, which had already been suggested as proper and expedient. Jefferson gave some good reasons against it, and Knox mentioned a late pasquinade describing the funeral of George Washington and James Wilson, and placing the President on a guillotine. What followed, Jefferson's unfriendly pen related. "The President was much inflamed, got into one of those passions when he cannot command himself, ran much on the personal abuse which had been bestowed on him, defied any man on earth to produce one single act of his since he had been in the government which was not done on the purest motives, that he had never repented but once the having slipped the moment of resigning his office, and that was every moment since, that, by God, he had rather be in his grave than in his

present situation. That he had rather be on his farm than to be made emperor of the world, and yet that they were charging him with wanting to be a king. That that rascal Freneau sent him 3 of his papers every day, as if he thought he would become the distributor of his papers, that he could see in this nothing but an impudent design to insult him."

The breach between the two secretaries had widened so much that it was no longer possible to maintain even the appearance of intercourse. The meetings of the Cabinet only developed the differences, and Jefferson saw with increasing displeasure a growing tendency in Randolph to follow Hamilton's lead. Unable or unwilling to continue the contest, Jefferson again notified the President of his wish to resign, but expressed a readiness to remain in office till the close of the year. Hamilton had already said he would retire at the end of the coming session of Congress, and so a truce was made. The rules of neutrality and for restoring prizes were framed and published, and it was decided not to call Congress at an earlier day than that fixed by law. Silenced in council, Jefferson freely expressed his opposition in his *Anas*, and in his letters to his friends. When the plague broke out in Philadelphia the President went to Mount Vernon, and Jefferson to Virginia, so the separation put an end, for the time being, to personal encounters between the two secretaries. Another incident favoring a better spirit was the enforced suspension of Freneau's newspaper.

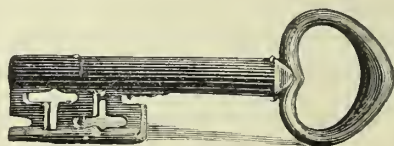
On his way to Mount Vernon Washington stopped at the site of the new federal city to take part, as a Mason, in the ceremonies of laying the corner-stone of

the Capitol. His interest in furthering the success of the new settlement had been constant and urgent. It was through his efforts the district had been chosen, the conflicting interests of property holders harmonized, the troublesome annoyances of an insubordinate engineer silenced, and the attacks of speculators averted. He had approved the plans of L'Enfant, selected such squares as were to be reserved for public uses and buildings, and encouraged Hallet and Thornton in their designs for the public offices and home of Congress. With appropriate ceremonies, with corn, oil, and wine, and the never-absent oration, the corner-stone was laid, and Washington felt that the fear of removal to another place was by this act abolished. In contrast, Genet was writing to his superiors in France in indignant terms against the President, who had, in his opinion, so ruthlessly sacrificed the rights of France. "This friend of Lafayette, who affects to adorn his parlor with medallions of Capet and his family ; who has received letters from the pretended regent, which were brought to him by Noailles and Talon ; and who continues to see these villains, calls me anarchist, Jacobin, and threatens to have me recalled because I have not delivered myself to the federalist party, who wish to do nothing for us, and whose aim is to establish here a monarchy." The secretary of the English minister was no less captious in his comments on the decorations of the President's house, though he did not draw the profound political significance from them that so kept alive the inquietude of Genet. Thornton noted that the key of the Bastile and a portrait of Louis XVI. hung in the principal room.

The direct references of Washington to the French revolution had become more rare as the anarchy became more pronounced. In May he had described the affairs of France as in the highest paroxysm of disorder, "not so much from the pressure of foreign enemies, (for in the cause of liberty this ought to be fuel to the fire of a patriot soldier, and to increase his ardor,) but because those in whose hands the government is intrusted are ready to tear each other to pieces, and will more than probably prove the worst foes the country has." Shut off from his correspondence with Lafayette, now a prisoner, and with Morris, he had no occasion for recording an opinion. Not until Jefferson submitted to the Cabinet the draft of the letter to Morris on Genet's misconduct, was a glimpse of the President's views afforded. Objection had been made to the words "liberty warring on herself." Washington "with a good deal of positiveness declared in favor of the expression; that he considered the pursuit of France to be that of liberty, however they might sometimes fail of the best means of obtaining it, that he had never at any time entertained a doubt of their ultimate success, if they hung well together, and that as to their dissensions there were such contradictory accounts given that no one could tell what to believe." If the affairs of France would issue in a government of considerable freedom, it would be the only power in Europe with which the United States could have relations.

His opinion was fortified by the enforcement of certain orders in council of the British ministry. That the woes of France were largely due to a condition of the

population approaching famine had been noted for many years. The wars against the allied nations only increased this pressure of want, and it must be from the outside that the people of France must be fed. With all Europe closed against her demands, America was the one great source of supply of corn, and the English sought to close this by seizing any vessel laden with grain for France. To attempt to conquer France by arms was too large a task to be undertaken, even had its issue been beyond doubt; but while preparing to reduce her by arms, starving her into a reasonable submission could be applied, and with this in view the orders were issued. France, in self-defense, altered her decrees so as to permit the same seizures of neutral vessels, and these measures placed her on an equality with Great Britain in the eyes of Washington. Both nations were warring upon American commerce, and it only remained to determine from which one the greater damage would be received.



CHAPTER XII

INSURRECTION



EW subjects were to come before the new Congress, assembled in December, and the President read his message on the 3d. The subjects to be treated had been long and ardently debated in the Cabinet, and the final result embodied a compromise between the two extreme policies entertained by Jefferson and Hamilton. After stating the fact of war in Europe, the objects of the proclamation of neutrality and the rules incident to its enforcement were given. It rested with the wisdom of Congress to correct, improve, or enforce the plan of procedure, as well as to provide remedies or penalties for violations of the law of nations, and to define the jurisdiction of the courts. "I cannot recommend to your notice measures for the fulfilment of *our* duties to the rest of the world, without again pressing upon you the necessity of placing ourselves in a condition of complete defense, and of exacting from *them* the fulfilment of *their* duties towards *us*. The United States ought not to indulge a persuasion, that, contrary to the order of human events, they will forever keep at

a distance those painful appeals to arms, with which the history of every other nation abounds. There is a rank due to the United States among nations, which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it ; if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known, that we are at all times ready for war." This was the key-note of the message, and foreign affairs overshadowed every other concern.

In supplementary messages the pending questions with France, Spain, and Great Britain were treated, and all the correspondence with Hammond and Genet, a very few letters being omitted, laid before Congress and published. In very moderate language the extraordinary conduct of Genet was characterized, but no intimation was conveyed of a diminution in the friendly attachment of France through his ill-advised acts. He was properly treated as an individual, and held responsible for his own conduct. "It is with extreme concern I have to inform you, that the proceedings of the person, whom they have unfortunately appointed their minister plenipotentiary here, have breathed nothing of the friendly spirit of the nation, which sent him ; their tendency on the contrary, has been to involve us in war abroad, and discord and anarchy at home. So far as his acts, or those of his agents, have threatened our immediate commitment in the war, or flagrant insult to the authority of the laws, their effect has been counteracted by the ordinary cognizance of the laws, and by an exertion of the powers confided to me. Where their danger was not imminent, they have been borne with, from sentiments of regard

to his nation ; from a sense of their friendship towards us ; from a conviction, that they would not suffer us to remain long exposed to the action of a person, who has so little respected our mutual dispositions ; and, I will add, from a reliance on the firmness of my fellow-citizens in their principles of peace and order." Genet retorted by printing his side of the dispute, and requested the President to lay it before Congress.

Such a demand was unnecessary, as Genet had lost all his influence, and was shunned by the extreme favorers of France as well as by the Federalists. His own country disavowed him, for a new party, other than that to which he owed his appointment, was in power. Robespierre drew up the report of censure, and did not spare the less able and blood-thirsty revolutionist. " He has made use of the most unaccountable means to irritate the American government against us ; he affected to speak without any pretense, in a menacing tone ; and to make proposals to that government equally contrary to the interests of both nations ; he endeavored to render our principles suspected or formidable, by exceeding them by the most ridiculous applications. By a very remarkable contrast, while those who had sent him to America, persecuted at Paris, the popular societies, denounced as Anarchists, the Jacobins courageously struggling against tyranny, Genet at Philadelphia made himself chief of a club, and never ceased to make and excite motions equally injurious and perplexing to the government. Thus the same faction which wanted to subject the people in France to the aristocracy of the rich, endeavored in a moment to set free and arm all the negroes to destroy our colonies."

It must have given even the reserved Washington a sense of pleasure to learn that the Republic of France had unequivocally disapproved Genet's conduct, and had given the strongest assurances that his recall should be hastened. Fortunately for Genet he remained in the United States, for he thereby saved his head.

Delivering his long-delayed report upon the commercial restrictions imposed upon American commerce by European nations, a report that had been more than two years in his hands, Jefferson prepared to lay aside the duties of his office. Even in this last act he could not be entirely free from motives. The report was carefully prepared, in many respects was a very able paper; yet it leaves the impression of having been prepared for a purpose, and of laying undue stress upon English restrictions. The justification could be urged that from the peace of 1783 England had in no respect modified her commercial policy, and had made no real concession to the products or shipping of the United States in English or in colonial ports. France, on the other hand, had conceded privileges, from which, to be sure, her merchants gained, and had given important reductions in duty and shipping dues. When the report was first prepared, it was a fair summary of the state of affairs; but when it was published, France had ranged herself with Great Britain in dealing harshly with American commerce. In the West Indies and in home ports, both nations committed depredations on American trade but little short of downright theft, for the cover of the law was extended to plunder under pretense of the necessities of war. The report was,

therefore, ingeniously calculated to hamper the negotiations of the new Secretary of State.

The interchange of expressions of regard between the President and the outgoing Secretary were formal. "Be pleased to accept my sincere thanks," wrote Jefferson, "for all the indulgences which you have been so good as to exercise towards me in the discharge of it's duties. Conscious that my need of them has been great, I have still ever found them greater, without any other claim on my part than a firm pursuit of what has appeared to me to be right, and a thorough disdain of all means which were not as open and honorable, as their object was pure. I carry into my retirement a lively sense of your goodness, and shall continue gratefully to remember it. With my sincere prayers for your life, health and tranquillity, I pray you to accept the homage of the great and constant respect and attachment, with which I have the honor &c." Washington's reply was simpler in spirit and in language. "I cannot suffer you to leave your station without assuring you, that the opinion, which I had formed of your integrity and talents, and which dictated your original nomination, has been confirmed by the fullest experience; and that both have been eminently displayed in the discharge of your duty. Let a conviction of my most earnest prayers for your happiness accompany you in your retirement."

It was with sincere regret that Washington took leave of Jefferson. Of all the men who were available, he united the largest number of desirable qualities, and no other man, but Adams or Jay, could show the same aptitude and training for foreign affairs. Neither of

these would take the office, and the difficulty of finding a fit man was great. His old associate, Thomas Johnson of Maryland, declined the appointment. Against Edward Rutledge and Dr. McClurg of Virginia, the charge of speculation could be brought ; while to name Chancellor Livingston would lead to a political explosion in New York. The office was finally tendered to the Attorney-General, Edmund Randolph, who was about to resign because of his embarrassed fortune. Hamilton's conduct of the Treasury was now under investigation, but at its termination he was to retire ; and even Knox had expressed an intention to follow the example. Randolph would thus be the one connecting link between the old and the new Cabinet, a position which should have given him great influence with the President.

The public interest was now centred on foreign affairs, and on Randolph came a combination of events which would have overcome a very much stronger man. Relations with France were in a most unsatisfactory situation. There was no channel through which remonstrances could be made or negotiations suggested. Genet in the United States was impossible as a minister, and Morris in France was not grateful to the faction in power, and was a helpless though able spectator of the horrible scenes which brought the Jacobins into their short day of triumph. A new minister, Fauchet, arrived in February, but his character was unknown. The Spanish negotiations were at an end, and there was no immediate prospect of any occasion for reopening them. England was enforcing her orders in council, and seemed to gain in arrogance each day, in spite of the earnest

remonstrances of Pinckney. Seizures and sales of vessels and cargo, impressment of seamen, and annoyances and open plundering by the colonial officials, had excited a strong feeling among the merchants of America. They had suffered heavy losses, and were averse to sending their vessels and cargoes from port, so almost certain were they to fall a prey to the British. Jefferson's report aggravated the feeling and prepared the way for an acceptance of Madison's commercial resolutions.

Indeed these resolutions did not go far enough to satisfy the popular demand, always in advance of what is necessary in a time of excitement. The framer intended only to meet restriction with restriction and prohibition with prohibition. To force Great Britain into a commercial treaty, or, failing that, to strike a blow at her commerce with the United States, he contemplated war as a remote possibility. The power to negotiate, or to place some bound to the greed of England, was contained in these resolutions. They were set aside, and under the direction of the southern members a full embargo was declared. The eastern contingent came into the measure because of their constantly increasing losses in the West Indies, and thus the most active medicine for doing injury to the commerce of the United States was applied. Other propositions, of even less creditable character, were laid before the House, such as the sequestering of British debts and the establishment of a lien on British merchandise as it should arrive. Dishonesty would have been a mild description of the wishes of the extremists.

Washington saw with great misgiving the progress

of this policy of baiting Great Britain. No one could be more conscious of the small claim to consideration that nation had on the United States. There had been such a studied neglect to all advances and protests from the United States as to justify the belief of a true hostility, only awaiting its time to become open and aggressive. Yet the occurrence of war was to be avoided at any cost. America was not prepared for it, and in the condition of Europe as it then was, not a single ally could be counted upon. England and Spain were united against France, and all northern Europe was combining against the dangers threatened from French fanaticism for "liberty." Nothing was to be gained by war, for no question between the two powers could be determined by an appeal to arms. Deliberate repudiation of debts might wipe out old scores, but at too great a cost to the country resorting to it. War would not alter the commercial policy of England, nor restore the western posts, nor would it put an end to impressments, for a naval victory only could challenge the practice and with the practice the right. But the United States possessed no navy, and all the enthusiasm shown in throwing up fortifications, laying keels, and training the militia could not bring the country into a state of preparedness for war. Peace was the only policy to pursue, but with Congress rushing towards war, some extraordinary precaution was demanded.

The President, not favoring the measure imposing an embargo, which would be little short of a declaration of war, turned to diplomatic negotiation for mending the situation. Although the American minister to Great Britain was an able man, the neglect of the British

government to meet his advances with other than temporary expedients and concessions in each specific case as it arose, made it unlikely he could accomplish more than he had gained, even when aided by the supposed argument of the embargo. His despatches pointed more and more towards the futility of further representations, and hinted that a threat of war and a reasonable display of force alone could secure a more considerate attention. Pinckney had reached the point when he felt further appeals were in vain, and a withdrawal of the mission the next move to be taken. Washington determined to send a special envoy to London, not to supersede Pinckney, but to make such representations to the ministry as would bring into relief the temper prevailing in the United States.

Hamilton, recently emerged with honor from the congressional investigation into his conduct, was his first choice, but the mere mention of his name brought out such intense opposition from Virginia as to induce the President to abandon the idea. Recognizing the dislike of this faction to his own appointment, Hamilton pointed out Jay as best fitted for the negotiation, and Washington sent his name to the Senate for confirmation. Some objections were raised to thus conferring a new duty on the Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court, but the evident sincerity of the President and Jay's undeniably great qualifications for the task were admitted and carried the point. "A mission like this," said the message of nomination, "while it corresponds with the solemnity of the occasion will announce to the world a solicitude for a friendly adjustment of our complaints, and a reluctance to hostility. Going immediately from

the United States, such an envoy will carry with him a full knowledge of the existing temper and sensibility of our country, and will thus be taught to vindicate our rights with firmness, and to cultivate peace with sincerity."

The disgraceful termination of Genet's mission, and some further changes in the French administration, made it desirable to remove every possible cause for complaint, and Morris was recalled. To find a successor who should be agreeable to France and acceptable to the United States was a question of some difficulty. If Jay would consent to remain in London, as minister, Pinckney might be transferred to the Paris mission. As a southern man he would carry a geographical sentiment of value, even if he was not a good republican. Jay declined, and the office was tendered to Robert R. Livingston, who came nearer to a realization of what the so-called French party would endorse. But the Chancellor was more intent upon local politics, where the future prizes were greater, and expressed an unwillingness to go to Paris.

Washington now turned to the pure Virginia opposition and asked Madison to take the appointment. The offer was not taken, and after some delay, Monroe was asked. It was Monroe who had sharply antagonized Hamilton's nomination, and he was known to be a follower of Jefferson. That he was an ardent sympathizer with Genet was not suspected, and had the fact come to the knowledge of Washington, he would never have considered Monroe for the place. His principal competitor was Aaron Burr, who was quite as fit if republicanism was to be the test, but whose character was

entirely subordinated to his ambitions, and his unscrupulous conduct had already made him an impossible candidate for Hamilton's following. Monroe accepted and pledged himself "to promote by my mission the interest of my country, and the honor and credit of your administration, which I deem inseparably connected with it."

With Jefferson's retirement from the Cabinet, it was assumed that his views were no longer represented, and Hamilton's policy had full possession of the President. Randolph had made himself first suspected of heresy to republican ideas, and finally, as the situation in the Cabinet became more strained, he was classed as a follower of Hamilton and Knox. In losing Jefferson, Washington lost all claim upon the republicans, and was more openly attacked by them than ever. The absurd cry of monarchy was only one of the weapons of attack; his every act was noted and the motive assigned with little regard to truth or even to appearances. Talleyrand came to America as an *émigré*, and as one distasteful to the ruling party of France. He brought a letter of introduction to Washington from the Marquis of Lansdowne, yet for public reasons the President could not receive him. The French minister would have taken offense and the French administration would have complained. Worst of all, the charge of unfriendliness to France would be urged by Jefferson and his party. With a sarcasm not often used, Washington wrote to Morris: "The affairs of this country *cannot go amiss*. There are *so many watchful guardians of them*, and such *infallible guides*, that one is at no loss for a director at every turn." Yet no man was more scrupulous of

keeping well within the limits set by the Constitution, and never in thought did he plan to overstep the bounds. "The powers of the executive of this country," he wrote to Hamilton, "are more definite, and better understood, perhaps, than those of any other country; and my aim has been, and will continue to be, neither to stretch nor relax from them in any instance whatever, unless compelled to it by imperious circumstances."

The time was at hand when he was called upon to exert his full power. The excise on distilled spirits had met with some opposition in Carolina and Pennsylvania, and in the latter State was counted a burdensome charge, imposing a tax at once unjust and really oppressive. This discontent would have offered some friction to the collection, but could never have developed into a forcible resistance to the officers charged with the execution of the law, had it not been for the interference of some politicians for electioneering purposes. Hounding of revenue officials was followed by robbing of the mails, and the people, led by a few bold but lawless schemers, held meetings, passed resolutions of resistance, and easily became a mob when an object was raised. A few, Gallatin among them, sought to stem the current, and counselled peaceful measures, but the faction of violence, countenanced by men who were playing with the movement for their own gain, carried the gatherings into riot. Citizens unfriendly to the uprising were ordered to leave the country, and from resisting service it was but one step to looting and burning of houses of officers and firing upon the agents of the law.

So grave a situation had not been presented since

the peace. For the first time open resistance was offered to the United States government in the execution of its laws, and so dangerous a precedent, if admitted, could only result in the destruction of that government. There was enough protest and spoken opposition to the enforcement of the neutrality policy, but mere criticism could be tolerated. Had mobs risen in the cities to set aside the decrees of the courts or to drive the revenue officers from the performance of their duty, the same crisis would have occurred as must be met in Pennsylvania. Hamilton at once recognized the necessity for putting down the opposition at any cost, even by employing an armed force, and he laid his views before Washington.

At first moderate measures were applied. On August 7th the President issued a proclamation reciting the lawless acts of the combinations to defeat the execution of the law, and calling upon the persons concerned to disperse quietly to their homes. "It is in my judgment necessary under the circumstances of the case to take measures for calling forth the militia in order to suppress the combinations aforesaid, and to cause the laws to be duly executed, and I have accordingly determined so to do, feeling the deepest regret for the occasion, but withal the most solemn conviction, that the essential interests of the Union demand it, that the very existence of government and the fundamental principles of social order are materially involved in the issue." Not entirely convinced through the usual sources of information, he further wrote to his correspondents in Virginia, to ask in what estimation the conduct of the insurgents was held, and if a resort to

force would be so far approved as to obtain aid from the militia of Virginia. Cautious as he was, he left no means untried for gaining assurance of support and eventual success.

The influence of political activity had not escaped him. Under the enthusiasm called out by Genet's progress, certain societies had been formed affecting French ideas and favoring the French revolution. As the membership was largely of those who were critics of Washington's administration, their performances were soon turned in that direction, using their leanings to France more as a cover and an excuse. Wherever an opening offered for encouraging discontent, it was seized upon, whether it was in Kentucky, where the people were being taught that their interests were being sacrificed to Spain; or in the east, where an abject surrender to Great Britain and a petition for peace were held up as grievances; or in Pennsylvania and Carolina, where the excise law served as the immediate cause for creating opposition. No proof of the exertions of the government to obtain concessions from Spain and the English ministry was equal to the persuasive intimations of those who saw in discontent a triumph of their principles. The western population felt the restrictions of Spain, and the wholesale seizure of vessels by the British was a loss immediately felt; and in both cases the smart prevented a full realization of the remedy. The government was charged with procrastination, with an undue surrender of rights, and with the purpose of increasing its own powers at the expense of those of the States, at the sacrifice of the rights of the people. From a common centre these ideas were propagated,

and the leaders were well known, for the hotbed of republicanism centred around Jefferson.

Actual rebellion brought the matter to an issue. Levying a force so large as to overawe opposition, Washington marched against the insurgents, who melted away before him. Leaving a part of the force in the territory to complete the work set before it, he returned to Philadelphia still sore over the actions of the "Democratic Societies," although feeling that they had gone too far for their own ends to be further dangerous. "That these societies were instituted by the *artful and designing* members (many of their body I have no doubt mean well, but know little of the real plan,) primarily to sow the seeds of jealousy and distrust among the people of the government, by destroying all confidence in the administration of it, and that these doctrines have been budding and blowing ever since, is not new to any one, who is acquainted with the character of their leaders, and has been attentive to their manœuvres. I early gave it as my opinion to the confidential characters around me, that, if these societies were not counteracted, (not by prosecutions, the ready way to make them grow stronger,) or did not fall into disesteem from the knowledge of their origin, and the views with which they had been instituted by their father, Genet, for purposes well known to the government, that they would shake the government to its foundation. Time and circumstances have confirmed me in this opinion."

The specious pleas of these meetings and societies, spreading mischief far and wide, he valued at their true worth. "Can any thing be more absurd, more arrogant, or more pernicious to the peace of society, than

for self-created bodies, forming themselves into permanent censors, and under the shade of night in a conclave resolving that acts of Congress, which have undergone the most deliberate and solemn discussion by the representatives of the people, chosen for the express purpose and bringing with them from the different parts of the Union the sense of their constituents, endeavoring as far as the nature of the thing will admit to form *their will* into laws for the government of the whole ; I say, under these circumstances, for a self-created *permanent* body (for no one denies the right of the people to meet occasionally to petition for, or remonstrate against, any act of the legislature) to declare that *this act* is unconstitutional, and *that act* is pregnant with mischiefs and that all, who vote contrary to their dogmas, are actuated by selfish motives or under foreign influence, nay, are pronounced traitors to their country? Is such a stretch of arrogant presumption to be reconciled with laudable motives, especially when we see the same set of men endeavoring to destroy all confidence in the administration, by arraigning all its acts, without knowing on what ground or with what information it proceeds?"

The assertion of the authority of the government in suppressing the insurgents of Pennsylvania was the most direct step taken by Washington to confirm the Constitution he had sworn to uphold. A sign of weakness, a vacillating policy, a discussion of the rights of the people, would have been fatal, and only anarchy, the easiest road to despotism, would have followed. The progress of events in France had strengthened his horror of license, and was a more potent factor in his political development than all of Jefferson's schooling,

and his republican doctrines. It was not so much a fuller acceptance of Hamilton's point of view (although the last quotation reflects Hamilton's essays of "Tully," published at this time), as it was the taking one more step towards a strong government, based upon the popular will, a step justified only after long and careful balancing of arguments in his own mind. The whole incident was characteristic,—a little hesitancy at the first measures, consultation with his friends, and a firm and intelligible pursuit of the policy when once undertaken. Open to suggestion and eager for advice until his mind was made up, he was independent when once convinced, and could not be ticketed as Hamilton's man or as Jefferson's man. In recognizing this feature of his character and acting accordingly Hamilton proved himself far wiser than his competitor. Never did the Secretary of the Treasury have any doubt of the sincerity and strength of purpose of his chief. Jefferson, on the other hand, regarded him as a tool in the hands of others, and even as an uncandid and deceitful man, all of which was far from the truth.

Mob and club government, from which nothing but anarchy and confusion could come, this was the lesson learned by Washington from the whisky insurrection. The participation in recent events of the Democratic societies was so clear to him that he wished to strike a telling blow at them, to thoroughly discountenance them. The message to Congress gave a reasonably full account of the uprising and the measures taken for its suppression. It was a source of congratulation that the people understood the true principles of government and liberty, and felt their inseparable union ; that, notwithstanding

all the devices which had been used to sway them from their interest and duty, they were "as ready to maintain the authority of the laws against licentious invasions, as they were to defend their rights against usurpation." In urging the citizens to cherish and preserve inviolate the Constitution, he glanced at the societies, suggesting that the insurrection had been "fomented by combinations of men, who, careless of consequences, and disregarding the unerring truth, that those who rouse, cannot always appease, a civil convulsion, have disseminated, from an ignorance or perversion of facts, suspicions, jealousies, and accusations of the whole government."

Moderate as were these phrases they were taken by both House and Senate to refer to the societies, and a bitter debate followed in the House. The insurrection was deservedly odious, but this attempt to connect the self-created Democratic societies, and through them to involve the republicans, was deeply resented by Madison, who was now the spokesman of that party. He termed Washington's reference to the societies as, perhaps, the greatest error of his political life. To Jefferson, who, since his retirement, had devoted himself to declaring the shameless corruption of a part of the first and second Congresses, and its subserviency to the Treasury, the reference was no less displeasing. The dearth of news where he was surprised him, and if ignorance was the softest pillow on which a man could rest his head, the people had such pillows. "Judging from this of the rest of the Union, it is evident to me that the people are not in a condition either to approve or disapprove of their government, nor consequently influence

James MacHenry.

From the drawing by St. Mémin now at Pikesville, Baltimore Co., Md., in the house belonging to the estate of the late J. Howard MacHenry.



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it." Yet it was this ignorance that he had been playing upon, and arousing to action by hinting dangers and undermining characters indirectly. "I see, under a display of popular and fascinating guises," was Washington's description of the tactics employed, "the most diabolical attempts to destroy the best fabric of human government and happiness, that has ever been presented for the acceptance of mankind."

To Jefferson, it was an attempt to restrain the liberty of the citizens to meet together and exchange sentiments ; to demand for punishment the censors of public measures. "It is wonderful indeed, that the President should have permitted himself to be the organ of such an attack on the freedom of discussion, the freedom of writing, printing and publishing." For his part he could see no less danger in the Cincinnati, a self-created society, carving out for itself hereditary distinctions, lowering over the Constitution, meeting periodically in all parts of the Union, with closed doors, and accumulating a capital in its separate treasury. "Their sight must be perfectly dazzled by the glittering of crowns and coronets, not to see the extravagance of the proposition to suppress the friends of general freedom, while those who wish to confine that freedom to the few, are permitted to go on in their principles and practices." The President's act was an "inexcusable aggression," and the excise law was an "infernal one," leading direct to the dismemberment of the Union.

At the end of the year Knox retired from the War Department, a loss keenly felt by Washington. Without possessing brilliant qualities, Knox had a steadiness of purpose and, within somewhat narrow limits, a solid

capacity of seeing and doing what was necessary, that made him useful in the field and in the Cabinet. From the first year of the war, when Knox brought down from Ticonderoga to Boston the heavy cannon, his relations with Washington had been close and responsible. At no time did the shadow of difference arise between them, and on no occasion did Knox fail to perform what was ordered, with zeal and a measure of success. Incapable of leading, he made an excellent subordinate, and his sound character made him as useful to Hamilton in his duel with Jefferson, as to Washington in his efforts to secure a medium course of honor and public safety. In addition to an expression of sincere friendship, Washington wrote at the parting: "I cannot suffer you to close your public service, without uniting with the satisfaction, which must arise in your own mind from a conscious rectitude, my most perfect persuasion, that you have deserved well of your country."

One month later Hamilton withdrew from the Cabinet and service, having submitted the final report needed to round out his financial policy, a plan for redeeming the public debt. Of all the men who were with Washington as President, Hamilton has the greatest claims for public gratitude. His efforts to secure the adoption of the Constitution would have gone for nought had he not given the frame of government the solid foundation of public credit and an inviolable performance of the national honor. As a member of Washington's military family, he had obtained a training that was of the highest service in Congress and in the Cabinet. With much of the politician in his conduct, with a readiness to adopt dangerous measures to attain a certain goal,

he was gifted with a prescience that made him a most necessary foil to Jefferson. His foresight was limited, for he was strongly practical. With an ability to see a question in its many relations, he was so intent upon carrying his point as to forget there was such a thing as the people as final arbiter. In joining the public creditors with the impost question in 1783, in carrying the Constitution through the convention of New York in the teeth of a powerful and determined opposition, and finally in securing the acceptance of his financial measures, he educated his party, but it was a party limited in numbers. Freely employing the press as an instrument, he never abated one tittle in his style of argument, which was an appeal to reason, to the intelligence of the community. The dignity and rare quality of his treatment of public measures were in curious contrast with his readiness to build up a combination to make them active, by means that gave color to the charges of his enemies.

His relations with Washington did not call out the same measure of almost affection that marked those of Knox, Greene, or Lafayette. A certain amount of reserve always existed between them. Yet right royally did Hamilton speak of his former chief in 1783, when the trial of disbanding the army threatened to lead to disaster. "Mr. Hamilton said, he knew General Washington intimately and perfectly; that his extreme reserve, mixed sometimes with a degree of asperity of temper, both of which were said to have increased of late, had contributed to the decline of his popularity; but that his virtue, his patriotism and firmness, would, it might be depended upon, never yield to any

dishonorable or disloyal plans into which he might be called ; that he would sooner suffer himself to be cut to pieces."

Washington could not be a mere follower of Hamilton, for his habit of mind prevented. That the brilliancy of the younger man produced its impression was true, but on the leading points of public policy there was a tacit agreement long before Jefferson entered the field. That the Constitution must be preserved, that the government under that Constitution must be upheld by legal methods, and that a conduct of strict neutrality to foreign nations should be pursued, while insisting upon a proper recognition of rights and a full performance of treaty obligations—there was no secret or improper motive needed to bring the President and Hamilton together on these subjects. Using the same standards for public policy, they employed different methods at times, and herein lay the dividing factor. Hamilton recognized party as an essential, while Washington appealed to the good of the country.



CHAPTER XIII

EUROPE



REAT interest was shown in the intelligence from Europe. The first of the envoys to be heard of was Monroe. The instructions given to him were general, as the actual situation of France, where all was shifting so rapidly, could not be accurately foreseen. While making himself acceptable to the French government, he was to maintain the self-respect due to his own. "The President has been an early and decided friend of the French Revolution; and whatever reason there may have been, under our ignorance of facts and policy, to suspend an opinion upon some of its important transactions; yet he is immutable in his wishes for its accomplishment; incapable of assenting to the right of any foreign prince to meddle with its interior arrangements; persuaded that success will attend their efforts; and particularly, that union among themselves is an impregnable barrier against external assaults." As to Jay's mission, Monroe could assure France that nothing should be done to weaken the engagements between the United States and

France. "You will be amply justified in repelling with firmness any imputation of the most distant intention to sacrifice our connection with France to any connection with England. You may back your assertions by a late determination of the President to have it signified abroad that he is averse to admit into his public room, which is free to the world besides, any Frenchmen, who are abnoxious to the French Republic."

After a little delay, Monroe was introduced to the Convention, where he made an address which might have passed unnoticed at any other time, but which was certainly unwise under the existing conditions. Robespierre had just been swept aside, and a new government was on trial. The war against the powers, of which England was one, was being pushed, and for the most part with success. But in that war the United States had no place, and, if he could prevent it, Washington determined it should not be involved. To make, therefore, pledges of almost unlimited fraternity, and utter what could only be interpreted as a full endorsement of French efforts and policy, was to break down that rule of strict neutrality it was so desirable to maintain. The enthusiasm of the presentation, with its kiss and accolade, could not account for Monroe's indiscretion, for he had prepared his speech and read it in English. From London came a complaint on Jay's part, and it involved Randolph as well as the Minister to France. "Your letter by Mr. Monroe, and his speech to the Convention are regarded here, as not very consistent with the neutral situation of the United States. An uneasy sensation has thereby been made here on the public mind and probably on that of the Cabinet."

When the address was read by Washington, he also thought Monroe had not been well advised in what he said, and had overstepped the true line of what he had intended to accomplish. Yet he was inclined to take a lenient view of it, even considering it well to alarm as well as offend the British ministry, that they might be led to bring Jay's negotiations to a speedy and happy result. Monroe, realizing that he might have gone too far, made a lengthy defense, and pleaded the delicacy of his situation. Only a few days passed after the receipt of Jay's complaint, when there came a copy of Monroe's letter to the Committee of Public Safety on the conduct of France in harassing the commerce of the United States. After making a strong protest against these acts, as contrary to the stipulations of treaties, Monroe made the astonishing assertion that he was not instructed to complain of or demand the repeal of the decrees under which the spoliations were conducted, and if it were decided that the decrees brought some solid benefit to the Republic, the United States would bear the consequences not only with patience but with pleasure. It required no study to see that Monroe, contrary to his express instructions, had yielded the very point on which must hang all claims of damages for injuries committed on American commerce by France. Little wonder, therefore, that Washington thought his conduct "extraordinary."

Before a remonstrance could be made, Jay closed his negotiations and sent the resulting treaty in duplicate by two packets. A mystery has surrounded the delay in reaching America. Although sent from London at the end of November, the papers did not reach

Randolph until the following March, too late to be laid before Congress. The delay was unfortunate, as it gave the opponents to any treaty with Great Britain an opportunity of marshalling their forces and spreading all manner of rumors of its contents. To add to the embarrassment, Monroe, offended by not being taken into the confidence of Jay, and pledged deeper than was justified by facts to the French committees, wrote home of his grievance, and did not spare Jay. Coming as these often abusive letters did direct to Jefferson, their contents and spirit were soon known among the republican followers.

Calling the Senate to meet on June 8th, Washington laid before it the treaty and other documents connected with it. Behind closed doors they were considered, while the tide of opposition outside of Congress was steadily rising. The issue was made ; for all who favored any treaty whatever with Great Britain were necessarily aristocrats and plotters for a monarchical government. This argument was so clear that it did not require the support of facts drawn from the nature of the treaty. It carried weight long before a sentence of the instrument had become known, because it brought to a focus all the discontent of years. Before the knowledge that any treaty had been signed could reach America, the extreme French party were burning Jay in effigy, deriding his conduct in England, and seeking by every means to discredit the results of his mission, whatever they might be. For months this arousing of public opinion by partisan methods continued, so the actual arrival of the treaty found a heated faction ready for any act save that of accepting it. Even the French Minister made the

improper request that no vote should be taken on the treaty until the arrival of his successor. In the Senate Burr made a motion that the treaty should be radically modified and further negotiations begun. Another Senator, Tazewell, from Virginia, went so far as to move an instruction to the President not to sign the treaty, but both motions were voted down, and on June 24th, by a vote of two to one, the Senate advised and consented to a conditional ratification. The change of one vote from the majority to the minority would have thrown out the treaty.

Washington had before him the treaty for more than two months before sending it to the Senate, and, after balancing the reasons for and against accepting it, decided for taking it as the best possible attainable. Jay more than once insisted upon the influence of Washington's character upon the British ministry. "I ought not to conceal from you," he once wrote, "that the confidence reposed in your personal character was visible and useful throughout the negotiation." Yet measured by his instructions the ambassador had not fulfilled what he had been sent to obtain, and he had rather postponed a settlement of disputed points while placing them in train for a final adjustment. Essential justice had been secured on lesser matters, while on greater the evidences pointed to mutual concession and, under favorable conditions, the elimination of the sources of friction. The treaty was not what it should be: Jay even admitted that; but no other so favorable to the United States could be had, and the two countries had been on the verge of war. Knowing the dangers of rejecting the treaty, and seeing no real cause for war, Washington

sent in the paper prepared to sign it when ratified by the Senate

It was returned to him with the endorsement of that body save as to one clause, which concerned the trade with the West Indies, and more particularly the trade in cotton. The clause could be omitted without affecting the rest of the treaty, but could the President sign with such an exception? Should he not first refer the matter to England, and have some agreement as to the objectionable clause? If its omission or suspension was agreed to, would it be necessary again to submit the entire treaty to the Senate? Whatever course he took might lead to complications, and the public were clamoring for a sight of the contents of the treaty. While weighing these questions Washington directed Randolph to publish the paper. Before the order could be carried out a summary was printed by the *Aurora*, the paper of Bache, the grandson of Benjamin Franklin, and on the next day a Senator, Mason of Virginia, a strong opponent of the treaty, violated his pledge, and gave out his copy.

At once all the inflammable material took fire, and an extraordinary campaign of abuse, misrepresentation, and effigy-burning was begun. No terms were too strong to be applied to Jay, and he was represented as a traitor, who had sold the interests of his country to Great Britain. Every omission in the treaty was seized upon as evidence of his pusillanimous surrender; every commission in it was useful for the same purpose. While these out-and-out opponents of the treaty, blind themselves, were blinding others to whatever merits Jay's work might have, were agitating for meetings,

addresses, and pamphleteering against it, Washington turned to Hamilton, and asked for an opinion. So congenial a subject brought out a masterly answer, and the conclusion was on the whole in favor of accepting it, with the exception of the clause suspended by the Senate. It gave a prospect "of escaping finally from being implicated in the dreadful war which is ruining Europe, and of preserving ourselves in a state of peace for a considerable time to come. Well considered, the greatest interest of this country in its external relations, is that of peace. The more or less of commercial advantages which we may acquire by particular treaties, are of far less moment. With peace, the force of circumstances will enable us to make our way sufficiently fast in trade. War, at this time, would give a serious wound to our growth and prosperity. Can we escape it for ten or twelve years more, we may then meet it without much inquietude, and may advance and support with energy and effect any just pretensions to greater commercial advantages than we may enjoy."

Weighty as was this reasoning, Washington did not favor a feature of the treaty which concerned the trade with the Indians. In place of reciprocity, there seemed to be important concessions made to the British without any return. "All this looks well on paper," he said, "but I much question whether in its operation it will not be found to work very much against us." He knew that British agents had been the cause of great uneasiness among the Indians on the American side and feared their influence would be continued. He would restrain the traders of both nations to their own side of the line, leaving the Indians on each to go to

whichever their interest, convenience, or inclination might prompt them. He was also in doubt as to the privileges obtained for an indirect trade with Great Britain in the products of other countries. Hamilton's opinion that the new clause, if agreed upon, must be submitted to the Senate embarrassed him, for his Cabinet was of a contrary view. His calm examination of the points of the treaty, and with a view to maintain peace, offered a striking contrast to the generally ignorant denunciation of the framer and his work.

The first formal protest came from Boston, where an English vessel had been burnt, and while the mob feeling was strong a meeting had been held to frame reasons for rejecting the treaty. With these reasons, an express rider was sent to Philadelphia, and in his course similar meetings were held, not unaccompanied by riots, as in New York, where Hamilton was stoned when trying to address the assemblage. To burn the treaty, to denounce Jay, and to insult the British flag were the outward symptoms of the spirit of disorder ; back of it was the opposition to the administration, an opposition which would have welcomed war with England did it only put an end to the Federalist sway. The address from Boston found Washington at Baltimore, on his way to Mount Vernon, and in the hurry of departure an answer was omitted. This did not show that the President had not come to a determination, for one of his first cares after reaching his home was to instruct Randolph, and in terms the meaning of which could not be misinterpreted. "The conditional ratification (if the late order, which we have heard of, respecting provision vessels, is not in operation,) may, on

all fit occasions, be spoken of as my determination, unless from any thing you have heard or met with since I left you, it should be thought more advisable to communicate further with me on the subject. My opinion respecting the treaty is the same now that it was, namely, not favorable to it, but that it is better to ratify it in the manner the Senate have advised, and with the reservation already mentioned, than to suffer matters to remain as they are, unsettled."

It was well that he made this short journey from Philadelphia, for it enabled him to get out of the centre of dispute, where the controversy was hotly conducted, to gauge the feeling in other parts. "From indirect sources," he wrote, "I find endeavors are not wanting to place it [the treaty] in all the odious points of view, of which it is susceptible, and in some, which it will not admit." And along the road he found the same leaven at work which fermented a part of the town of Boston. From the Gazettes he learned of the agitation in the north and east, and saw with sorrow rather than fear the intensity of the movement. "Much indeed to be regretted, party disputes are now carried to such a length, and truth is so enveloped in mist and false representation, that it is extremely difficult to know through what channel to seek it. This difficulty to one who is of no party, and whose sole wish is to pursue with undeviating steps a path, which would lead this country to respectability, wealth, and happiness, is exceedingly to be lamented. But such, for wise purposes it is presumed, is the turbulence of human passions in party disputes, when victory more than *truth* is the palm contended for, that the 'post of honor is a *private station*.'"

Having a decided opinion of the course to be taken, something extraordinary was required to turn him aside. His answer to Boston was moderate,—that he saw no reason for rejecting the instruction of the Senate. Addresses against the treaty continued to pour in, for the agitators had not lost any time in organizing the opposition, and as yet little had been heard from the other side. The very fervor of this fever was sufficient to cast a doubt on its permanency, or on its being the full expression of public opinion. “At present,” the President wrote to Hamilton, “the cry against the treaty is like that against a mad dog; and every one, in a manner, seems engaged in running it down.” That it did not cure old sores, that it sacrificed the trade of the United States in its specialties, food and raw products, and that it violated solemn engagements with France,—these phases were harped upon in every possible point of view, and produced an impression even on Washington.

While in this fierce light of opposition, Washington saw the first numbers of a defense of the treaty, signed Camillus, and published in a New York paper. Pleased with the ability, he wrote to Hamilton, who was Camillus himself: “To judge of this work from the first number, which I have seen, I auger well of the performance, and shall expect to see the subject handled in a clear, distinct and satisfactory manner:—but if measures are not adopted for its dissemination a few only will derive lights from the knowledge or labor of the author; whilst the opposition pieces will spread their poison in all directions; and Congress more than probable, will assemble with the unfavorable impressions of their

constituents. The difference of conduct between the friends and foes of order and good government, is in nothing more striking than that the latter are always working like bees, to distil their poison; whilst the former, depending oftentimes *too much* and *too long* upon the sense and good dispositions of the people to work conviction, neglect the means of effecting it."

Hamilton was in his element, and poured forth essay after essay on the treaty, aided in consultation by Jay and King. He had taken for the medium the *Argus*, a paper bitterly opposed to the treaty and to Hamilton himself. Week after week the essays appeared, gaining in vigor and mastery as the opposition increased, until finally the printer of the journal complained that he was hearing from his subscribers and could only print six columns of Camillus a week. Hamilton at once threatened to transfer his writings to some other paper, and Greenleaf, knowing the ever-increasing weight attached to the articles, withdrew his objection. Jefferson, more observant than Washington, recognized Hamilton's work from the start. He watched the progress of the contest with increasing disquiet, and felt round for some weapon of defense, if not of attack. He saw Hamilton in every essay of ability in favor of the treaty, and recognized the inability of some of his chosen followers in their replies. Unable to endure the anxiety longer, and seeing the influence exerted by Camillus, he turned to Madison, and implored his aid. "Hamilton is really a colossus to the anti-republican party. Without numbers, he is a host in himself. We have had only middling performances to oppose to him. In truth when he comes forward, there is nobody but

yourself who can meet him. For god's sake take up your pen and give a fundamental reply." Flattered by this appeal from his chief, Madison entered the lists, and satisfied no one.

The tide was turning, and the President looked forward to issuing the ratification on his return to Philadelphia early in August. While giving due importance to the weight of the opposition, he was preparing his mind against the calumny which disappointment and malice would heap upon him. He did not dread this so much as he did the effect a ratification would have on the French people, for they would certainly regard it as an abandonment of their interests. Domestic differences could be smoothed over, but no assertions could do more than weaken the impressions imbibed by France, that her commerce had been sacrificed to her enemy. "It is not to be inferred from hence, that I am or shall be disposed to quit the ground I have taken, unless circumstances more imperious than have yet come to my knowledge should compel it; for there is but one straight course, and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily."

A very dramatic incident, and one still of doubtful meaning, intervened to hasten the signing of the treaty. Receiving an urgent message from Randolph, who wrote at the suggestion of his colleagues, that he should return at once to Philadelphia, Washington obeyed. There was submitted to him the translation of a despatch from Fauchet to his superiors in France, which had been intercepted by the English, and had reached Pickering's hands through the British minister. In this paper Fauchet seemed to indicate some indiscretions

on Randolph's part, and hinted dishonesty and political ambitions not consonant with his character. The language used and the inferences drawn from current events were really only those which Jefferson had so industriously propagated, and proved his influence over Randolph. The use made of this disclosure by Pickering and Wolcott was not creditable, for it was intended to drive Randolph from the Cabinet. On the other hand, the explanations made by the suspected secretary were too unsatisfactory to clear his reputation, and in resigning he accepted the inevitable.

Opposed as he was to ratifying the treaty, his retirement removed what might have proved an obstacle to signing, and on August 18th the President performed the final act. He trusted this would put an end to the agitation. "Meetings in opposition to the constituted authorities are as useless at all times, as they are improper and dangerous," was his message to John Adams. And to James Ross he wrote: "The consequences of such proceedings are more easily foreseen than prevented, if no act of the constituted authorities is suffered to go into execution unaccompanied with the poison of malignant opposition. If one could believe that the meetings, which have taken place, spoke the general sense of the people on the measure they condemned, it might with truth be pronounced, that it is as difficult to bear prosperity as adversity, and that no situation or condition in life can make them happy."

Randolph's retirement took from the Cabinet the last remnant of the original four, and once more Washington was called upon to complete the circle of his advisers. When Judge Patterson declined he sought

to induce his old friend, Thomas Johnson, to accept the portfolio of State. Failing in that, he turned to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, who pleaded that it was not in his power to take office. Before a choice could be made, the time was at hand for framing the instructions for the new negotiations with Great Britain, as directed by the Senate, but Jay thought the present moment unfavorable for continuing the negotiations.

The search for a Secretary of State continued, and a chance conversation with Governor Lee pointed to Patrick Henry as one likely to accept. Washington had often wished to bring this Virginian into the administration, for the intense opposition he once displayed to the Constitution had become softened into an acceptance of the frame of government. With eagerness the possibility was seized upon, and in flattering terms the offer was made, with a statement of Washington's own attitude. "I can most religiously aver I have no wish, that is incompatible with the dignity, happiness and true interest of the people of this country. My ardent desire is, and my aim has been, (as far as depended upon the executive department,) to comply strictly with all our engagements, foreign and domestic; but to keep the United States free from political connections with every other country, to see them independent of all and under the influence of none. In a word, I want an American character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for ourselves, and not for others." Upon such a declaration even the most extreme advocate of France or England could stand, and Henry, whatever were his views, would have endorsed the sentiment. But he could not be drawn into

taking office, and the same disinclination was shown by Rufus King. No really first character would willingly step into a place where he would be subjected to an appalling flood of abuse, calumny, and misrepresentation. Finally, late in November, Pickering was transferred to the Department of State, and Washington even more than before looked to Hamilton for assistance.

Weighing the subjects to be mentioned in his message to the new Congress, Washington hesitated over the treatment to be given to the English negotiations. Nothing definite could be accomplished before Congress assembled, and the fierceness of public differences upon the policy had in no degree subsided. The plan of the opponents of the treaty to still further embarrass the administration had taken form, and the question of an appropriation for carrying the proposed engagements into effect would bring forward the whole subject, even the power of the President and Senate to make treaties. Should the President in his message express his sense of the treaty and of the manner in which it had been treated? "If good would flow from the latter, by a just and temperate communication of my ideas to the community at large, through this medium, guarded so as not to add fuel to passions prepared to blaze, and at the same time so expressed as not to excite the criticisms and animadversions of the European powers, I would readily embrace it. But, I would decidedly avoid every expression which could be construed into a dereliction of the powers of the President with the advice and consent of the Senate to make treaties, —or into a shrinking from any act of mine relative to

it. In a word, if a conciliatory plan can be assimilated with a firm, manly, and dignified conduct in this business, it would be desirable ; but the latter I will never yield."

The necessity for caution was emphasized by the increasing bitterness of the republican papers against Washington. With no prominent character in the Cabinet to draw the fire, and no important election pending, all barriers of reserve were thrown down, and the writers aimed direct at Washington. It was not enough to denounce him as an aristocrat, a monarch, a violator of the Constitution, a tool of Great Britain, and similar intimations against his political standing. The calumny was pushed to his private character, and the charge of dishonesty was brought against him by one who called himself with exquisite sarcasm a "Calm Observer," and who was believed to be no less than the clerk of the House of Representatives, an intimate of Jefferson. He asserted that the President had received money from the Treasury not due to him. Hamilton had no difficulty in showing the falsity of the insinuation, for it rested upon mere assumptions, not facts ; but Washington felt the animus of the critic. The "voice of malignancy" was "high toned," and left no attempts unessayed to destroy all confidence in the constituted authorities. "I have long since resolved, for the present time at least, to let my calumniators proceed without any notice being taken of their invectives by myself, or by any others with my participation or knowledge. Their views, I dare say, are readily perceived by all the enlightened and well-disposed part of the community ; and by the records of my

administration, and not by the voice of faction, I expect to be acquitted or condemned hereafter." He would not even receive young Lafayette into his family lest it should be construed as an insult to France.

The message was one long note of congratulation on the peaceful and happy situation of the United States compared with the wars that were devastating Europe. France was not even mentioned by name, and only hopeful phrases were used to summarize the questions pending with other countries. Wisely, no reference was made to the factional spirit shown against the treaty, and so far as the message showed, there was no cloud in the horizon — unless the silent and studied omission of France and French affairs could be of ominous portent. A note applying to Congress was struck in the closing paragraph. "Temperate discussion of the important subjects, which may arise in the course of the session, and mutual forbearance where there is a difference of opinion, are too obvious and necessary for the peace, happiness, and welfare of our country to need any recommendation of mine."

With the proceedings of Congress the President had little immediate connection. The formal ratification of the treaty by the King was known and proclaimed on the 29th of February. The treaty itself was laid before Congress on the following day, and a warm discussion soon arose in the House over a motion to call upon the President for the treaty papers. Madison raised the question of the power of the House over treaties, and set forth doctrines which, if admitted, would interfere with, and in the end destroy, the power to make treaties. In the attempt to establish his position, Madison was

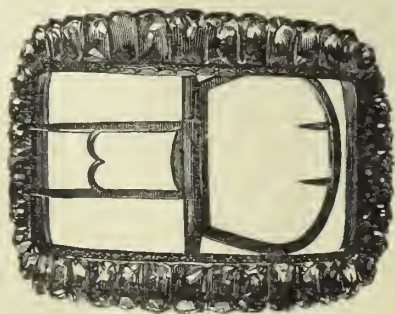
obliged to contradict his own utterances made in the Virginia convention of 1788, but, so eager a partisan had he become, this inconsistency was of small moment. The House, while undecided on the constitutional argument, sent the call for papers to the President. Hamilton was at first inclined to admit a partial right in the lower branch of Congress to make such a request, but when the constitutional bearing of the question was developed, he advised an absolute refusal. To such an opinion Washington had already come. His message as effectually punctured the dangerous claim that the assent of the House was required to the validity of a treaty as it parried the personal thrust at himself. For it was impeachment or the harassing of the President which was intended, and, besides, all the papers had been laid before the Senate. Madison said the absolute refusal was as unexpected as the tone and tenor of the message were improper and indelicate; yet the precedent thus established has remained unchanged.

Even the House was unable to shake it at the time. The resolution for requesting the papers and the dispute whether the treaty was a good one or not, were only covers for striking at the fundamental principles of the Constitution. So evenly balanced was the opinion that the vote of the Speaker was required to advance matters, and the appropriations needed to carry the treaty into effect were granted by very small majorities. The motives of those who led the attack were open to suspicion, for a rejection of the treaty would favor the faction in sympathy with France, and probably involve the United States in the war in her behalf. So extreme a use of party threatened to undo all that had been

done since the policy of neutrality had been adopted, and at such a crisis was dangerous to a degree. For France, becoming more and more restive under the supposed slight of the treaty, was drifting towards an open rupture with the United States. The promises of Monroe, so freely given on his arrival, had not materialized; nor had he been able to induce the French government to modify its severe decrees against American ships and products, ostensibly modelled after those of Great Britain. Against the assertions and endeavors of the ministry, American ships were wrongfully seized and condemned in the British West Indies, and the French agents and governors imitated them, for reciprocity as well as for gain. Impressments continued, and the administration still believed that the Indian troubles in the West had their origin in British machinations, and in the South in Spanish intrigue. The arrival and ready acceptance of the treaty negotiated by Pinckney at Madrid was a temporary victory for the Cabinet, and had its influence in quieting the unrest of the inhabitants on the western waters. Temporary it was, because the French found in its provisions too much good material for charging bad faith on America to let it pass without protest.

Weary with the cares of his office, Washington thought little of the success attending his effort to protect the powers and dignity of the executive. The apparent loss of some strength with the people affected him more. Unlike Jefferson, who sought to whip the masses into an expression of opinion, Washington thought a cool judgment was the one to be waited for and followed. "Whatever my own opinion may be on

this or any other subject interesting to the community at large, it always has been, and will continue to be my earnest desire to learn, and, as far as is consistent, to comply with the public sentiment; but it is on great occasions only, and after time has been given for cool and deliberate reflection, that the real voice of the people can be known." He still deprecated the heated discussion of public policy, which spared no reputation and halted at no misrepresentations to obtain an advantage. It was useless to plead that the great body of the citizens meant well, and with proper information would act well, but that the sources of information were poisoned or inactive. "These things do fill my mind with much concern and with serious anxiety. Indeed, the trouble and perplexities which they occasion, added to the weight of years, which have passed over me, have worn away my mind more than my body, and render ease and retirement indispensably necessary to both, during the short time I have to stay here."



CHAPTER XIV

FAREWELL ADDRESS



THE time was approaching when he must make some declaration of his intention to retire. His intimates were fully aware of his purpose, but urged arguments of weight to induce him to set it aside, and permit the people to again elect him the President. Nothing could prevail with him, for it was a sense of diminished influence that dominated him. Not one member of his earlier Cabinet, except Hamilton, was in his confidence, and the men who had followed were of a far different calibre. Pickering was as active a politician as Jefferson, and in some respects as able. But he was totally wanting in what saved Jefferson's political methods and made them in the end successful—a high imaginative faculty. While Jefferson was an intuitive leader, fertile in resources and possessed of a devoted following, Pickering was influenced by another, and was looked upon as an instrument of Hamilton. The charge was not entirely true, but there was enough basis to it to reduce the influence the Secretary of State might have exerted. Wolcott labored

under the same disadvantage, and with greater justice could he be said to be directed by another. The financial policy of Hamilton had not yet given rise to a system working smoothly in all its parts ; so what could be more natural than for Wolcott to turn for advice to the man who had drawn the great outlines of a system, and knew the relations of every part.

Unfortunately for themselves, both looked to Hamilton for direction and counsel, and Hamilton was becoming more and more of a party man. The disappointment in not obtaining the English mission was but one of the many he experienced, for in New York politics he sought to be the master and met with little success. He saw the rising tide of republicanism, but could not appreciate that he was an important factor in producing it. His methods for discounting John Adams's vote at the first election were known, and his opposition to Burr had made him enemies in his State. The question of passing over Adams in the approaching election was presenting itself to him. He sounded Patrick Henry on a candidacy, and when Henry refused to take the bait, Thomas Pinckney, just returned from his diplomatic success in Spain, was selected as most available. These plans resulted in producing divisions among the Federalists, and at no time could the party less afford such destruction of strength. He imposed so heavy a sacrifice upon his followers that many refused to follow. At this time, however, he was strong with Washington, and with the leaders of the Cabinet. For McHenry, as Secretary of War, was hardly large enough for the place, and failed when put to the touch ; and Charles Lee, as Attorney-General, was able, industrious, but much of a nonentity.

Washington again took up the draft of a farewell address to the American people. It was to Madison he had submitted his first thoughts, in 1792, and it was Madison who had then drafted the paper. Much had happened since that time, and it was now impossible to turn to Madison, who had become a hostile critic of the administration, and one of its ablest, because one of its subtlest, opponents. It was to Hamilton that Washington turned, and submitted an outline of the paper, the "body" of the proposed address. "My wish is," he wrote, "that the whole may appear in a plain style, and be handed to the public in an honest, unaffected simple part." Avoiding personalities, and allusions to particular measures, such a plain statement might serve a good purpose, as proving he had entertained no ambition to extend the powers of the executive beyond the limits prescribed by the Constitution, and as lessening the pretensions to patriotic zeal and watchfulness, on which his opponents sought to build their own consequence. Having sent the sketch to Hamilton, Washington soon after went to Mount Vernon.

Nearly a year must elapse before he could lay down the cares of office, and in the meanwhile the questions continually arising must be met. After a little demur, Rufus King was sent as minister to England, a selection which proved to be most fit in every respect. The conduct of France in seizing American ships becoming more unendurable, and Monroe's inability to meet the difficulties more pronounced, Washington contemplated sending a special envoy to explain the views of the United States and to ascertain those of France. Upon submitting the suggestion to his Cabinet, he received in reply

a joint letter advising the recall of Monroe. Not only had he been inattentive to the instructions given to him, a dangerous omission in its results, but he had carried on an active correspondence on state affairs with those who were bitterly opposed to Washington's policy. Agents under his immediate charge had sent anonymous letters on political matters charged with abuse and denunciations of the government. Could the public interests be longer safe in such hands? The evidence submitted left little doubt of Monroe's failings, and his recall was to follow. Marshall was asked to accept an appointment as the successor, but found excuses for declining, and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney was asked to take the responsibility. "It is a fact too notorious to be denied," was Washington's message to him, "that the greatest embarrassments under which the administration of this government labors, proceed from the counteraction of people among ourselves, who are more disposed to promote the views of another nation, than to establish a national character of their own; and that unless the virtuous and independent men of this country will come forward, it is not difficult to predict the consequences."

Monroe, soon after his return to the United States, made the error of seeking redress through a "defense," a long and labored account of his mission. In this he not only proved his own weakness, and fully justified the conduct of the administration in recalling him, but he gave Washington an opportunity to record at full length his opinion of the defense and the man who wrote it. Monroe had violated his instructions; had neglected to use his information to allay the distrust of

the French authorities ; had entertained suspicions and doubts which clouded his vision ; had allowed the "bug-bear treaty,"—the contents of which he did not know, and had refused to receive from Jay, but which he was well assured contained nothing hostile to French interests,—to be brought forward whenever American claims were pressed, and had remained silent. He was blinded by party views, and had been found incompetent, remiss in his duty, pursuing wrong courses, and proved a mere tool in the hands of the French government, cajoled and led away always by unmeaning assurances of friends. These caustic comments of Washington were not published until long after Monroe had passed away.

The summer of 1796 was passing rapidly and Washington turned to the completion of his address. Hamilton had taken Madison's draft and modified it, but was not satisfied with the result, for a supplementary part offered difficulties. "It has been my object," he wrote, "to render this act importantly and lastingly useful, and, avoiding all just cause of present exception, to embrace such reflections and sentiments as will wear well, progress in approbation with time, and redound to future reputation." The paper pleased Washington as being more copious on material points, more dignified on the whole, and with less egotism. An afterthought occurred to him, and he wished to add a word in favor of a university at the seat of government. He had long had such an institution in prospect, to obviate the necessity of sending American youth to foreign countries, where they might contract principles unfavorable to republican government before they were capable of appreciating its advantages. The shares in the naviga-

tion companies had, with the consent of the State, been devoted to this purpose and a Virginia institution; and he now wished to urge the subject in its general aspects. The old fear of local policies clung to him, and he saw in the university and associations of the federal city instruments for doing away with those feelings. "What but the mixing of people from different parts of the United States during the war rubbed off these impressions? A century, in the ordinary intercourse, would not have accomplished what the seven years' association in arms did; but that ceasing, prejudices are beginning to revive again, and never will be eradicated so effectually by any other means as the intimate intercourse of characters in early life,—who, in all probability, will be at the head of the counsels of this country in a more advanced stage of it."

To embody in a single paper the best results of his observation and experience, and to clothe them in terms befitting their importance and capable of ready apprehension were his objects, and in attaining them Hamilton's talents were needed. The thoughts were Washington's, but the language and arrangement were Hamilton's, showing the experienced pamphleteer. The sustained dignity of the address, and the perfect sincerity of the man, would have given it a careful and respectful consideration under any circumstances. But Washington wished more. He remembered his circular letter to the States in 1783, and conceived that it had been useful in bringing on the Union. He would now give a political testament which should cement that Union the more closely, and should offer sentiments for the solemn contemplation and frequent review of the

people calculated for that end. He had seen the force of local prejudices and sectional interests ; he had realized the dangers of mixing in, or of becoming connected with the policies of Europe ; and he had been made to feel the shafts of bitter and empoisoned factional disputes. Against each one of these menaces to a continuation of the Union he entered his protest, and raised the higher standard of a united people, working out its own political salvation by cherishing the best. He gave the “ disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsels.”

The Constitution, formed without fear or influence, and adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, should be supported, and sacredly obligatory upon all, until changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people. Obstructions to the execution of the laws served to organize faction, and to put, in place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party. Associations and combinations to control or overawe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, tended to become potent engines, by which the ambitious and unprincipled would be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and usurp for themselves the reins of government. The spirit of innovation should be resisted so far as it attacked the principles of the Constitution. Against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, a most solemn warning was made. The horrid enormities and frightful despotism shown in France by the alternate domination of one faction over another, were examples in point. With Jefferson’s plea in mind, he questioned the opinion that parties in free countries were useful checks upon the administration of the govern-

ment, or served to keep alive the spirit of liberty. "From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose, and there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched; it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume."

Good faith and justice should be shown to all nations. Permanent hatreds or passionate attachments were equally excluded under this rule, for either made the nation enduring them more or less a slave to their influence. Quarrels and war, without adequate inducement or justification would be invited, and the best interests of the people would be sacrificed. Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence too much jealousy could not be shown, but that jealousy must be impartial. "The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop."

This address was published in the columns of a gazette, and was rapidly copied by the press throughout the country. A twofold effect was produced. The Federalists were made more active in their search for a successor to Washington; and the republicans threw down all reserve and openly attacked Washington as the cause of all the political troubles. Bache and Duane conducted a campaign of personalities which has since rarely been equalled in bitterness. Bache reprinted

what were known to be forged letters of Washington issued by the British in 1776, in a vain effort to discredit him with Congress and the people ; Duane, under a false name, brought against him all the battery of republican grievance, and predicted that his name would soon sink into nothingness, and his reputation fade away. An aristocrat, he had introduced practices abhorrent to a republic, and kept men in livery and owned many slaves. As a statesman, he could point only to bad measures, and on examination his claims to any merits would be rejected. From France came the venomous attack of Thomas Paine, in which, for a supposed personal slight, he found no words or insinuations too gross to be used against the President.

His opponents and critics were not inclined to permit him to enjoy undisturbed the last few months of office. The first incident that met him on his return to Philadelphia was the publication on the very day of its presentation of an important note from Adet to the Secretary of State. Unless he was acting under instructions, this amounted to an indignity offered to the government. Adet was thus following in the footsteps of his predecessors, and Washington hesitated whether to show any signs of displeasure or to let the matter pass without comment. Hamilton, knowing Washington's ability to make a man sensible of his displeasure, advised a bearing which should be an exact medium between an offensive coldness and cordiality. "The point," he added, "is a nice one to be hit, but no one will know better how to do it than the President." From a newspaper controversy with a foreign minister, Washington drew back ; yet he wished to neutralize the effect

of Adet's indiscretion, so grateful to the French faction. He thought it would be well to lay before the coming Congress, the last he should address, a full statement of the relations with France, from the first coming of Genet. A single indiscretion might have been overlooked ; but when Adet repeated his offense, and gave every evidence of an intention, he imposed an obligation upon the President to maintain his dignity and assert his position. Adet had declared that his functions were suspended, and should the gage he thus threw down be taken up, a rupture with France would follow. It was justly believed that Adet wished to embarrass the administration and to influence the election of a president. Hence the greater need for caution, and a calm treatment of his hasty and ill-advised act.

Congress assembled and listened to the message of the President. The Indian questions were approaching solution, the posts had been surrendered by the British, and boundaries with English and Spanish possessions were being established. A navy would be necessary, as experience had proved mere neutrality was not sufficient to guard against the depredations of nations at war. Due encouragement might be given to such branches of manufacture as were needed to furnish and equip the public force in time of war ; agriculture should be advanced by the establishment of boards charged with collecting and diffusing information ; while a national university and military academy should be established. What had been accomplished was recounted in an almost exultant strain, for internal affairs were prosperous, and only needed peace to advance. It was upon them that Washington dwelt,

expressing regret in passing mention that foreign affairs were not so favorably situated. France had committed depredations on American commerce, and had made threats of going even farther in that line. "It has been my constant, sincere, and earnest wish, in conformity with that of our nation, to maintain cordial harmony, and a perfectly friendly understanding with that Republic. This wish remains unabated; and I shall persevere in the endeavor to fulfil it, to the utmost extent of what shall be consistent with a just and indispensable regard to the rights and honor of our country; nor will I easily cease to cherish the expectation, that a spirit of justice, candor, and friendship, on the part of the Republic, will eventually ensure success."

In their replies both House and Senate spoke gracefully of his approaching retirement. The words of the House approached exaggeration, and this was the more notable because a contest was anticipated over framing any reply favorable to the President. "The spectacle of a free and enlightened nation offering, by its Representatives, the tribute of unfeigned approbation to its first citizen, however novel and interesting it may be, derives all its lustre (a lustre which accident or enthusiasm could not bestow, and which adulation would tarnish) from the transcendent merit of which it is the voluntary testimony." To such language thanks could add nothing.

Expressions of approbation could not temper the harassing trials of the few months remaining of his public life. The attitude of France gave him great concern, and occupied his thoughts. "The conduct of France towards this country is, according to my ideas

of it, outrageous beyond conception ; not to be warranted by her treaty with us, by the law of nations, by any principle of justice, or even by a regard to decent appearances." Pickering had prepared, under his direction, a full account of the troublous relations with France, to be laid before Congress and to be sent to Pinckney for his guidance. It was a last appeal to the justice and interest of France. Long before it could reach that country it was known that Pinckney had been refused recognition as minister, and with circumstances of indignity.

To his successor Washington left the unravelling of this tangled thread of diplomacy. As the fourth of March approached he saw with joy the coming freedom. "To the wearied traveller, who sees a resting-place, and is bending his body to lean thereon, I now compare myself ; but to be suffered to do this in peace, is too much to be endured by some. To misrepresent my motives, to reprobate my politics, and to weaken the confidence which has been reposed in my administration, are objects, which cannot be relinquished by those who will be satisfied with nothing short of a change in our political system." And to his former aid, Jonathan Trumbull, he wrote that he retired without a single regret, and without any desire again to intermeddle in politics. John Adams, in taking office, paid a fit compliment to the prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude of his predecessor. Bache flung after him a valedictory that was as unseemly as it was dangerous to the reputation of the writer. It embalmed the grandson of Franklin in history as a snarling libeller of character. He will be known for the one editorial printed in the

John Parke Custis. (Upper left) from a contemporary miniature (artist unknown) in a gold double locket owned by Mrs. Kirby F. Smith, Baltimore, Md.

Martha Washington. (Upper right) from a contemporary miniature (artist unknown) in a gold double locket owned by Mrs. Kirby F. Smith, Baltimore, Md.

Nelly Custis. (Centre) from the painting by Gilbert Stuart owned by E. A. S. Lewis, Esq., Hoboken, N. J.

Mrs. Fielding Lewis, "Betty Washington." (Lower left) from the painting by John Woolaston formerly owned by H. L. D. Lewis, Audley, Berryville, Va.

Patty Custis. (Lower right) from a contemporary miniature (artist unknown) owned by Mrs. Kirby F. Smith, Baltimore, Md.



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Aurora on March 6th, long after all other record of his life has disappeared.

The irksome social duties which had oppressed Washington in official life had been laid aside, but this did not imply immunity from visitors at Mount Vernon. The formalities of levees and reception days did not appeal to the common sense of either the President or his wife, and the state functions even at that time were proverbially slow and without relief. The personal relations of Washington to his Cabinet were close, and became almost familiar as constant intercourse developed mutual tastes. The President's dinners and the receptions of Mrs. Washington afforded central points of social activities, but under such regulations as deprived them of that free interchange of passing thoughts which gave color and tone to the less formal gatherings. The attentions due to Congress and to the representatives of foreign nations imposed restrictions upon his ability to select his guests; and these restrictions were carried into his occasional meetings to such an extent that he used them for the purpose of obtaining information on matters of state before him more than for a relaxation of dignity and an exhibition of unofficial condescension.

For this the character of the man was answerable. It is always as an isolated individual that he appears in action as well as in his letters. Intimacies he never invited; liberties he never permitted; and his bearing restrained those first advances which invite and attract friendly companionship. In the earlier service at the head of the Virginia regiments he formed closer and more free friendships than in later years. He was then thrown in with men more of his own age and condition.

After retiring from that command he was acting with those who were his elders, like the leading Burgesses of that day, or with men of other habits and ideals, like the young and radical members of the House. In the Continental army his balance and caution kept him aloof, and the dangers of relaxing discipline by a neglect of rank were proved to him before he saw the British leave Boston. The cabal of the friends of Gates increased his reserve, and at the end of the war he had already become a popular hero, and was already surrounded by that mist which has done so much to make him misunderstood. Those who had won his confidence spoke of him in almost extravagant language ; and those who had cause to fear his influence readily found in his very dignity an excuse for their abuse or criticism.

It is, therefore, somewhat difficult to determine how he really appeared to his contemporaries. The popular shouts welcoming him to the Presidency had hardly died away before complaint was made of his leanings towards monarchy and aristocracy. His journeys in the North and South were accompanied by all the forms of outward and sincere respect, and the man was honored quite as much as the President. At times he appeared to have been too anxious to test the popular feeling, and to place too high a value upon opinion as expressed to him by those who stood well with the people. This anxiety was based more upon a desire to know what was passing in the public mind than upon a wish to be directed by it, and therefore he never so much as approached the position of a demagogue, who has no opinions of his own, but eagerly watches every change of popular opinion that he may change with it. Once

having taken a stand, the howlings of the press and the violence of party invective could not influence him. He saw many of his followers fall away from their allegiance ; he watched the rising tide of opposition threatening, as he believed, the very foundations of the government ; and he noted with misgiving the crumbling of the party with which he had become identified. Yet he never swerved from his national views to stoop to party vantage, to quiet local differences, or to favor the organization of party machinery. His ideas of office were high, and its responsibilities were to be neither taken up nor laid aside lightly, or with any other intent than the public good. With political managers around him fighting for advantage, his one condition to appointment was that the candidate was federal, that is, in favor of the government as formed by the Constitution. That test satisfied, general character and fitness for the office controlled.

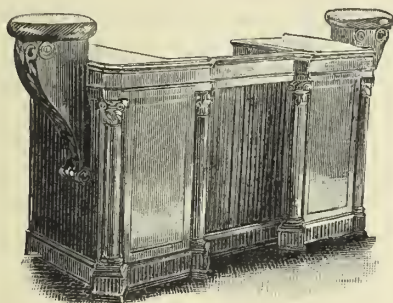
This quality of mind which made him a federal without being a Federalist, a union man and not a politician, was an active factor in keeping him aloof from his surroundings during the Presidency. The contest of party surged around him but he was not of it. In the Cabinet, it was Hamilton pitted against Jefferson, with the President as an eager, and often pained listener. In Congress, it was faction against faction, and some time passed before either side presumed to drag in the name of Washington in support of, or in opposition to, any particular measure. Some years elapsed before the popular discussions looked upon the President as favoring one party or the other, and a still longer time was demanded before the power of his name was looked upon

as the covering of a system of political thought subversive of public morality. Monocrat he was in fact, for he stood in "splendid isolation."

His state dinners were described as solemn affairs, and he was never quite at ease when undergoing the ordeal. The levees were intended for those who wished to pay their respects to the head of the government, and could not be other than formal ; a passing word and greeting were accorded to each, and an occasional short conversation upon a topic of more than ordinary interest. The evening receptions were more brilliant, and constituted the true social events of the season. The presence of ladies, and the gay attire, surpassed as it was by the dress of the diplomatic corps, made them notable even in Philadelphia, where the complaint of dissipation and social frivolity had often been raised. The simplicity of Mrs. Washington was well associated with the beauty and social talents of those around. The wives of the members of the Cabinet held a position near to the central object of interest, and Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Knox, and Mrs. Adams, with Mrs. Robert Morris and Mrs. Wolcott, shared honors with the social leaders of the city. Seriousness was the general mark of Washington's behavior, and only a few found him genial and gracious to a degree worthy of notice.

The judgment of a man, who on many occasions proved his ability to read character, is on the whole a true picture of Washington as he was in the Presidency. Edward Thornton, then secretary to the British minister, wrote : " His person is tall and sufficiently graceful ; his face well-formed, his complexion rather pale, with a mild philosophic gravity in the expression of it.

In his air and manner he displays much *natural* dignity ; in his address he is cold, reserved, and even phlegmatic, though without the least appearance of haughtiness or ill-nature ; it is the effect, I imagine, of constitutional diffidence. That caution and circumspection which form so striking and well-known a feature in his military, and indeed in his political character, is very strongly marked in his countenance, for his eyes retire inward, and have nothing of fire of animation or openness in their expression. If this circumspection is accompanied by discernment and penetration, as I am informed it is, and as I should be inclined to believe from the judicious choice he has generally made of persons to fill public stations, he possesses the two great requisites of a statesman, the faculty of concealing his own sentiments and of discovering those of other men. A certain degree of indecision, however, a want of vigour and energy, may be observed in some of his actions, and are indeed the obvious result of too refined caution."



CHAPTER XV

THE FARMER



ONCE at Mount Vernon Washington sought to withdraw from all active interest in politics. His name was still one to conjure by, and could an expression of his opinion be gained for any policy, great weight would go with it. Neither in State nor in national matters did he wish to intervene, and only to a few did he give his views of men and policies. In Virginia he stood quite alone, for it was a younger generation which was directing the concerns of the State, and most of his old associates were in opposition under the lead of Jefferson. He could not but show some interest in the development of those problems he had left to his successor, but it was the interest of a spectator, untinged with that stronger interest of a participant or leader. An atmosphere of remoteness was soon created, which enabled him to notice the event without weighing its relation to other events, or without seeking the motives that gave it color and origin. On learning that the French had refused to receive Pinckney, the first impressions were untouched by

indignation. "The conduct of the French government is so much beyond calculation, and so unaccountable upon any principle of justice, or even of that sort of policy, which is familiar to plain understandings, that I shall not now puzzle my brains in attempting to develop the motives of it."

The demands upon his time by the needs of his various plantations soon became sufficiently exacting. His ambitions were modest, even more so than when he had retired from the army. "To make and sell a little flour annually, to repair houses (going fast to ruin), to build one for the security of my papers of a public nature, and to amuse myself in agricultural and rural pursuits, will constitute employment for the few years I have to remain on this terrestrial globe. If, to these, I could now and then meet the friends I esteem, it would fill the measure and add zest to my enjoyments; but if ever this happens, it must be under my own vine and fig-tree, as I do not think it probable that I shall go beyond twenty miles from them."

While at the head of government he had never lost any of his interest in the operations of his plantations. The full schedules of property and its distribution, the names of slaves, the numbers of mules, pigs, and farm implements; the description of each field and the produce to which it was devoted; the schemes of rotation of crops and the many experiments made in treating the soil or planting new seeds; the yield of every plot of ground and the hours of labor and product of every slave—all of these different matters were stated and summarized in books and memoranda carefully drawn off in his own hand. Many of these papers were of

great length and of such detail as to have required days in their preparation. No business, even of a public nature, was of sufficient importance to keep him from this minute study of his farming operations, and he knew all the many and ever-changing features of his plantations through weekly reports from his overseers. For eight years, save when he was at Mount Vernon, these reports were sent, and called out suggestion, reproach, commendation, or indignation, according to their nature. They constitute a remarkable evidence of his natural bent and of his power of concentration.

It did not follow that all went well under this direction from a distance, which often proved unsatisfactory, and in no respect more so than in the conduct of experiments or new adventures. The supervision could not be so careful by those who had little or no interest in the result, and the difficulty of explaining clearly the intention of a novelty was at times insuperable. Machines, however simple, were misapplied by ignorant overseers and careless negroes. After trying many threshing machines, and obtaining little gain, he was almost resolved to go on in the old way of treading, until he could in person overlook the management. At some expense a large circular barn was built for treading, intended to serve as a model for the country ; but to his disgust he found the grain was spread as usual in an open field near by, exposed to every change of weather. Flour should be a profitable commodity, and he operated more than one mill. After studying the methods pursued in the mills on the Brandywine, probably at that time the best in the country, he ordered his miller to follow some of them. The lazy indifference of this man

prevented so much as an experiment being made, and left Washington in doubt whether it was more profitable to sell wheat in grain or as flour. He sought to impress economy upon his assistants, yet avoided carrying it to an extreme. "I shall begrudge no reasonable expense that will contribute to the improvement and neatness of my farms; for nothing pleases me better than to see them in good order, and everything trim, handsome, and thriving about them; nor nothing hurts me more than to find them otherwise."

A gentle master himself, he exacted from others kind treatment of his slaves. It could not escape his notice that many overseers looked upon the negroes in no other light than as if they had been horses or oxen, neglecting them when unable to work, and ceasing to care for them when sick. He fed them well, and was pained on learning that some of his help were complaining of being starved. "If, instead of a peck they could eat a bushel of meal a week fairly, and required it, I would not withhold or begrudge it them."

Close watching of the labor could not prevent impositions. Overseers were too much inclined to visit one another and indulge in drinking bouts, setting a bad example to those in their charge. The miller kept to his house rather than to the mill. Nails were converted into cash or rum. "All these overseers, as you will perceive by their agreements, are on standing wages; and this with men who are not actuated by the principles of honor or honesty, and not very regardful of their characters, leads naturally to indulgences, as *their* profits, whatever may be *mine*, are the same, whether they are at a horse race or on the farm, whether they

are entertaining company (which I believe is too much the case) in their own houses, or are in the field with the negroes." With white overseers and black slaves certain qualities were demanded to obtain good results. To neglect attention was to produce idleness, and the corrective of that, flogging, was not infrequently followed by serious consequences. Some could call out of the hands the best efforts, but such an overseer was rare. The larger number were wanting in this essential characteristic. "I am persuaded," Washington wrote of one, "he has no more authority over the negroes he is placed, than an old woman would have; and is as unable to get a proper day's work done by them as she would."

Naturally the affairs of the farm were in better train under his personal supervision than in his absence. In 1789 the breed of his sheep had been carried to such a point as to yield him an average fleece of five pounds of wool. Five years later, during which time he was in the presidency, less than one half that quantity was obtainable. Under his careful and watchful eye the woodlands were conserved, and in place of great waste of timber in rail fence, quickset hedges were planted. Attention to rotation was greater, and his very eagerness to assure success, or the due performance of what could promise success, raised difficulties between him and his general manager. "Strange and singular it would be, if the proprietor of an estate (than whom no one can be so good a judge of the resources as himself) should have nothing to say in, or control over, his own expenditures; should not be at liberty to square his economy thereto; nor should, without hurting the feelings-

of a manager, point to such alterations (admitting they were not the best, but such as he might incline to adopt, or at least propose;) especially too when it has been requested by that manager over and over again to do so. It is a matter of regret, and if these things should operate equally on others, it might be a means of preventing my ever having another manager—for I have no hesitation in declaring that I shall never relinquish the right of judging in my own concerns (though I may be pleased always to hear opinions) to any man living, while I have health and strength to look into my own business—especially as my sole inducement to give standing wages was to prevent those complaints which might arise from a difference of opinion and interference, if a share of the crops was to constitute the reward for service.”

With land such as that of Mount Vernon, a good loam more inclined to clay than to sand, and somewhat difficult to work, fertilizing presented no little difficulty. Cattle and sheep were few in number and manure could not be had in sufficient quantities to cover the fields. To open up the land, which became bound by frequent cultivation and want of proper dressings, a judicious succession of crops was required. The omission of his overseers to plough thoroughly frustrated these plans, and the crops usually cultivated held full sway. With the smallest discretionary power allowed them, they filled the land with that most exhausting crop, Indian corn, and thus still more reduced the fertility.

Plants and seeds were sent to him in great variety by those who knew his tastes. Some Guinea corn, from the island of Jamaica, he would try merely to

show the uses it could be applied to. Senator Hawkins gave him some white bent grass, the good properties of which were highly praised; and Arthur Young, who certainly knew much on farming, sent him many curious seeds and slips. Having expressed a wish to have some sacks of the seeds of the field peas and winter vetches sent to him from England, he was somewhat surprised to learn that Lord Grenville had issued a special permit in his behalf, as otherwise the seeds could not have been exported. His overseers ruined some of his ventures by their carelessness, but he could show very fair results in spite of their neglect. In some cases he could make a return to his English correspondents, as when he sent to Sir John Sinclair a sack of seeds of the early wheat, then something of a novelty in Virginia, and the product of accident. In this way his desire to make experiments was fully satisfied, and his observation trained in a line for which he had special aptitude. With an opportunity to exercise this bent to the full, it is difficult to fix the limit to which he might have carried it. In agriculture he was far in advance of his time, but constant interruption prevented a full trial of his ideas, and an even partial realization of his aims.

Unless some great change was made in methods of cultivation, he believed agriculture in the United States would decay. This thought occupied his mind in the last year of his administration, and he wished to make a specific reference to it in his speech at the opening of the session, of such importance did he regard it. "It must be obvious to every man, who considers the agriculture of this country, (even in the best improved parts

of it) and compares the produce of our lands with those of other countries, no ways superior to them in natural fertility, how miserably defective we are in the management of them ; and that if we do not fall on a better mode of treating them, how ruinous it will prove to the landed interest. Ages will not produce a systematic change without public attention and encouragement ; but a few years more of increased sterility will drive the inhabitants of the Atlantic States westwardly for support ; whereas if they were taught how to improve the old, instead of going in pursuit of new and productive soils, they would make those acres which now scarcely yield them anything, turn out beneficial to themselves—to the mechanics, by supplying them with the staff of life on much cheaper terms—to the merchants, by increasing their commerce and exportation,—and to the community generally, by the influx of wealth resulting therefrom.”

His own experience taught him that the relative returns from the soil were falling away, and each year he had increasing difficulty in meeting the expenses of the establishment. In truth agriculture in Virginia was approaching a critical period. The greater yield of grain in the middle States, and the beginning of a very profitable commercial crop in those of the south,—cotton,—placed Virginia at a disadvantage, and threatened to force her planters into tobacco culture to the exclusion of all else. Wheat could not lend itself to slave tillage, and the prices of produce tended steadily downward, while the taxes and wages of supervision remained as they had been. Little economies were carried to the utmost, but could not reduce the ever-growing

discrepancy between income and expenditure. His lands were rented on long leases, and did not return the increment due to settlement and rise of values. He more than once sought to dispose of his distant properties, and to rent the plantations near the home lot, wishing to have an assured income without the labor and anxieties of management. In this he was unsuccessful. Having a real abhorrence of debt, he pressed those who were indebted to him ; and, though he claimed only what was his right, never doing an act of injustice or positive oppression, his later letters give the evidence of one apparently over keen in money matters. The list of his charities would be long ; and he always had some dependent upon him, often those who had no real claim upon his purse and who made ungenerous returns.

In the summer of 1797 he drew a picture of his daily life. " I begin my diurnal course with the sun ; if my hirelings are not in their places at that time I send them messages expressive of my sorrow for their indisposition ; having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things further ; and the more they are probed, the deeper I find the wounds are which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years ; by the time I have accomplished these matters, breakfast (a little after seven o'clock) is ready ; this being over, I mount my horse and ride round my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces, come as they say out of respect for me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer as well ? And how different this from having a few social friends at a cheerful board ! The usual time of sitting at table, a walk, and tea, brings me within the

dawn of candlelight ; previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve, that, as soon as the glimmering taper supplies the place of the great luminary, I will retire to my writing-table and acknowledge the letters I have received ; but when the lights are brought, I feel tired and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as well. The next comes, and with it the same causes for postponement, and effect, and so on."



CHAPTER XVI

THE END



EVER did Washington falter in his desire for a peaceful conclusion of the disputed questions with France. It was only natural that he should feel keenly the rejection of Pinckney, a step as insulting as it was dangerous, as unjust as it was precipitate. Seizing upon every incident which could indicate a return to reason and a wish for friendly intercourse, he thought he saw a change in the attitude of the Directory, one more conducive to conciliation. He deplored the existence of a violent party in the United States, the principal object of which was to injure Great Britain even at the expense of a war, and he excused the French by their listening to the arguments of this party and acting accordingly. In John Adams he had high confidence, and approved his judicious resort to a commission of three envoys to France, one of whom was a Virginian who had slowly won his regard, John Marshall.

The intense partisan strife of the last years of his service had left an impress upon his mind, yet could not warp it into a partisan machine, seeing but one side

of a question. Before the event of the mission of the three envoys was known in the United States he had convinced himself of a very great change in the public mind on the relations with France. Only a failure of the mission was required to bring the people to a realizing sense of the questions at issue, and the true policy of the American government. A change had as well occurred in the arguments of the opposition. "It is laughable enough to behold those men amongst us, who were reprobating in the severest terms, and sounding the tocsin upon every occasion, that a wild imagination could torture into a stretch of power or unconstitutionality in the executive of the United States, all of a sudden become the warm advocates of those high handed measures of the French Directory, which succeeded the arrestations on the 4th of September." To extol such extreme events as arising from vigilance, wisdom, and patriotism, was certain evidence that passion and party views controlled, not dictates of justice, temperance, and sound policy. It would not require much of a development to show that constitutions, like treaties, could be put aside when inconvenient.

His view grew less hopeful as the session progressed, for he could see no diminution in the partisan attacks on the policy of the administration. Monroe published his ponderously ineffective "defense," intended as a scathing denunciation of the attitude of Washington and his Cabinet towards France. It fell upon insensitive ears, and only in Virginia was there an echo of approval. Already there was a want of cordiality between Adams and his advisers, due rather to the attempt to make government an instrument of

party than to any qualities of the President. From the members of the Cabinet Washington drew his information, and was unconsciously becoming as strong a partisan as others. The publication of the letter from Jefferson to Mazzei, in which a direct attack was made upon Washington's policy, put an end to what had come to be rather a perfunctory correspondence between the two men. Mutual interest in agricultural matters could not compensate for irreconcilable differences on every other question, and the protestations of lasting loyalty on the part of Jefferson could not be acceptable after the political denunciation known to be encouraged from that source. Too much was known to admit of cordial relations, and yet not enough to call for a complete severance of intercourse. The Mazzei letter gave the necessary cause, and thus closed the last door for any reconciliation. By the indiscretion of this wandering Italian, Jefferson's own plan for managing Washington was shattered. "Such is the popularity of the President," he had written in 1797, "that the people will support him in whatever he will do or will not do, without appealing to their own reason, or to anything but their feelings toward him. His mind has been so long used to unlimited applause that it could not brook contradiction, or even advice offered unasked. To advice when asked, he is very open. I have long thought therefore it was best for the republican interest to soothe him by flattering, where they could approve his measures, and to be silent where they disapprove, that they may not render him desperate as to their affections, and entirely indifferent to their wishes, in short to lie on their oars while

he remains at the helm, and let the bark drift as his will and a superintending providence shall direct."

That the two countries were drifting towards war, Washington firmly believed; that France would actually invade the United States he did not conceive as possible. Hamilton intimated that a war would inevitably force Washington from his retirement, for the public voice would again call him to command the army. Skilled in urging an unpleasant topic on him, Hamilton asserted he would be compelled to make the concession. "All your past labors may demand, to give them efficacy, this further, this very great sacrifice." The younger man, but shrewder politician, went so far as to suggest that Washington make a tour of the States,—a vulgar proceeding at the best. The wiser leader declined, readily anticipating the insinuations to which it would give occasion, and plainly intimating that the reception might not be what was expected. An overwhelming sense of duty or an imperious call from the country, leaving no choice, would be obeyed. Meetings were being held and addresses framed promising support to the general government. Such indications of a rising spirit of resentment against France were too numerous to be mistaken for expressions of a passing mood. Congress provided for enlisting an army should there be in the opinion of the President an imminent danger of invasion, or an actual declaration of war. Adams hesitated between calling upon the old generals or appointing a new set. "We must have your name," he wrote to Washington, "if you will in any case permit us to use it. There will be more efficacy in it, than in many an army." Before a reply to this suggestion

could be received, and on the second of July, he nominated to the Senate "George Washington of Mount Vernon, to be lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of all the armies raised and to be raised in the United States." The nomination was unanimously confirmed on the following day.

To McHenry, Washington expressed his feelings, and in full sincerity. "The principle by which my conduct has been actuated through life would not suffer me, in any great emergency, to withhold any services I could render, required by my country; especially in a case, where its dearest rights are assailed by lawless ambition and intoxicated power, contrary to every principle of justice, and in violation of solemn compacts and laws, which govern all civilized nations; and this, too, with the obvious intent to sow thick the seeds of disunion, for the purpose of subjugating the Government, and destroying our independence and happiness."

However difficult it would be to form an army, one measure could assure success or destroy all hope of promise. The general staff should be composed of respectable characters, knowing the demands of their respective departments and enjoying the confidence of the Commander-in-chief. A blunder in this direction would embarrass and delay his plans and could easily lead to defeat. Under a volunteer system the lower ranks of officers would be worthy of as much confidence as could be placed in untried men; but the general officers, both of the line and staff, would call for the greatest care in their selection. Insisting upon the all-importance of choice, he asserted that he must be allowed to choose such as would be agreeable to himself.

Of all the men willing to serve, Hamilton had the greatest claim on his favor, and it would have been Washington's wish to give him all that he could demand. Yet when Pickering suggested him for the second place, Washington saw at once that a concession would bar Pinckney from serving, and that would be a most unfortunate event. If France were mad enough to attempt an actual invasion of the United States, the first campaign would be made in the southern States. Not only were they near the West Indies and Florida, which could be used as bases of supply, but there would be found the largest number of French sympathizers and the possible assistance of the negroes. Pinckney's influence would be valuable in the three southern States, and was more powerful, through his connections, than that of any man who could be named.

Plunged thus suddenly in the details of weighing fitness for command, Washington submitted a list of such as he would wish to have associated with him. Charles C. Pinckney and Knox were to be major-generals; Hamilton was to be inspector-general, with a command. The brigadiers were all tried men, like Henry Lee, John Eager Howard, and William Stephen Smith. Edward Carrington was a most competent man for quartermaster-general, and Doctor Craik would be in charge of the hospitals. Not a name could be objected to, and yet the arrangement precipitated a difference very troublesome to Washington. Knox, for whom he had real esteem and love, was placed below Pinckney and Hamilton. In perfect candor Washington explained the reasons to Knox, and added: "I would fain hope, as we are forming an army *anew*, which army, if needful

at all, is to fight for every thing which ought to be dear and sacred to freemen, that former rank will be forgot, and, among the fit and chosen characters, the only contention will be, who shall be foremost in zeal at this crisis to serve his country, in whatever situation circumstances may place him." Knox was unconvinced.

Adams was convinced that a trick had been played upon him, and knew enough to believe that Hamilton had "managed" both himself and Washington to secure a high appointment. Washington had but one desire, — to secure the most eligible characters for the highly responsible offices, and his knowledge of those characters was certainly better than that possessed by Adams. To have his recommendations set aside, and appointments made without any consultation, gave him the alternative of submitting, and risking his reputation unnecessarily, or resigning his commission. In temperate language he stated his position to the President, and sought to obtain from him a definite decision on the points at issue. Adams, wisely advised and unwilling to antagonize the General without good cause, yielded so far as to give the same date to the three commissions of the major-generals, leaving to Washington the task of settling disputes as to rank.

Meanwhile much time had been lost. It was now late in October, and nothing had been done to collect the army. In the first heat of indignation the best men would offer their services; as the spirit and enthusiasm evaporated, the quality of recruits would tend to deteriorate. To meet the veteran troops of France with raw levies was to invite defeat. Washington, too, was disquieted by rumors of the intention of the opposi-

tion. He saw the brawlers against government suddenly become silent, and saw dangers of a plot to divide and contaminate the army. He had already determined to admit no foreigner into his family, and hinted a fear of introducing a hostile spirit into the army. "For my opinion is of the first that you could as soon scrub the blackamore white as to change the principle of a profest Democrat, and that he will leave nothing unattempted to overturn the government of this country."

Once imbibed, the thought of danger colored all his views, and he defended the alien and sedition laws for the same reasons that led him to denounce the Democratic Societies. Laws against aliens who acknowledged no allegiance to the United States, and who were, in many instances, deliberately sent to poison the minds of the people and thus subvert the Constitution and dissolve the Union, were expedient and constitutional. Yet the conduct of France had also called out a united people against aggression, and made them ready to resent the interference with their internal affairs and the infraction of solemn treaty agreements. He keenly felt the position taken by the legislature of his own State in opposition, while those of all the other States of the Union were coming forward with the most unequivocal evidences of approbation of the measures adopted for self-preservation.

Sensitive to what could affect his reputation, he shrank from a proposition that he could give greater peace to the country by coming forward once more into political life. Such a proposition could come only from one who had not been conscious of the change in party spirit, from one who was blind to all but a belief in

Washington's reputation. That abuse and criticism would spare him at a time when all bounds of decency had been thrown down, was inconceivable, and the lines of division between parties were now drawn so strictly that only a miracle would lead to a union. The personal character of a candidate would weigh but little with the voters, and the different local conditions would control in the face of a national concern. "Let that party set up a broom-stick, and call it a true son of liberty,—a democrat,—or give it any other epithet that will suit their purpose, and it will command their votes *in toto*." While writing these lines with regret, Washington was firm in his belief that he was powerless to stem the wave of faction and party. It might be pleaded that principle, not men, would be the object of contention; and a party label attached to any candidate would assure his victory or defeat. He was powerless. "I should not draw a *single* vote from the anti-Federal side, and, of course, should stand upon no other ground than any other Federal character well supported; and, when I should become a mark for the shafts of envenomed malice and the basest calumny to fire at,—when I should be charged not only with irresolution, but with concealed ambition, which waits only an occasion to blaze out,—and, in short, with dotage and imbecility."

The rest he craved was as remote as ever, and with anxious thoughts he strove to lay aside politics from his view. The course of the President did not please him, and he permitted his view to be colored by the opinions of those who had an interest in misleading him. The divisions among the Federalists gave him concern, for the opposing party presented an unbroken front, and

must win by sheer consistency against temporary and shifting combinations. The license of the press shocked him, for he held an opinion of the responsibilities of the editor that was violated daily and in every conceivable form. The possibility of France's obtaining Louisiana and the Floridas troubled him, for he had come to appreciate the importance of those dependencies, and the danger of having a restless and scheming power so near at hand.

Nor was it only in public matters he found good reasons for disquiet. His domestic plans had not been so successful in their issue as to afford him an income sufficient to meet the growing expenses of his many undertakings. The great cause of this—the economic situation of Virginia in relation to other States—has been explained. It became more active each year, and made itself known in an increasing need for money. Since leaving Philadelphia he had been pinched, and at the end of the year found himself in debt and obliged to sell some of his land to make it good. When his ward, Eleanor Custis, married, he gave no dowry, intending to make one in his will. The cares of the farm became wearisome, and he schemed to start plantations on some of his more distant holdings. For this, slave labor was needed, and of the quality of such labor he had been well instructed by experience. On his home farm he had more slaves than he could well employ. "To sell the overplus I cannot, because I am principled against this kind of traffic in the human species. To hire them out, is almost as bad, because they could not be disposed of in families to any advantage, and to disperse the families I have an aversion." So far had he

advanced in his opinion of slavery that he would gladly have parted with all, save a few household servants, substituting for them a system of tenant farmers. In this he was not alone among the large landowners of Virginia, who found the plantation methods fastened upon them and to their loss. But he did possess a deeper prescience of the remedy, and in his will provided for the eventual freedom of the slaves held in his own right, and for the support of such as might be unable to obtain a living. "The negroes thus bound are to be taught to read and write, and to be brought up to some useful occupation, agreeably to the laws of the commonwealth of Virginia, providing for the support of orphans and other poor children. And I do hereby expressly forbid the sale or transportation out of the said commonwealth of any slave I may die possessed of, under any pretence, whatsoever."

The end of the year 1799 was approaching, and brought no relief to his weary soul. On December 10th he prepared for his manager a plan for cropping the farms in 1800, a long and carefully prepared paper, full of details and minute in every direction. If he was conscious of declining powers in other faculties,—and he frequently confessed the feeling to his intimates,—he had lost nothing of his ability to grasp the many activities demanded by his extensive holdings and their relations to one another. His love of system and order was shown in every line, and like a good general he estimated the difficulties to be overcome and allotted his force accordingly. It was intended not only for one year, but for five years, and it would almost seem as though he had at last reached

the position he had so long sought, in which he could give an undivided attention to his lands, and expend that care upon them alone which had been frittered upon experiments or upon outside matters. "The accounts for the present quarter must be made final; as an entire new scene will take place afterwards. In doing this, advertise for the claims, of every kind and nature whatsoever against me to be bro't in to you by ye 1st of Jan.; that I may wipe them off, and begin on a fresh score."

On the same day snow fell, but this did not prevent him from taking his accustomed ride over his farms. For five hours he was out in snow, hail, and rain, returning at three in the afternoon without complaining of the severe exposure. The next day he remained within the house, spoke of a hoarseness and sore feeling of the throat, but made light of it. Within twenty-four hours after, the messengers went out from Mount Vernon bearing the intelligence of the end.

The sight of a nation in mourning is impressive; and it has rarely been presented more impressively than on Washington's death. For the moment abuse and noisy clamor of party ceased; and in civilized Europe, as in America, homage was paid to the memory of a man, but lately accounted a rebel against his King and a dangerous leader of faction against the interests of the people. No royal ruler has commanded the same profound respect which was then shown, and to few has it been granted to maintain so strong a hold upon the admiration and even the veneration of man.

The explanation is not far to seek. However favored by opportunities, his qualities enabled him to use them to the utmost. The simplicity of his character was notable,

and never was there a more transparent nature. Having once grasped a situation he pursued his way without turning, and his records of opinions and policy can bear only one interpretation. Enough has been given of his own words to illustrate the many phases of his character, but singleness of purpose and lucidity of intuition mark them all. To sum up such a career would be difficult, for the surroundings throw strange lights upon it, and it is in the light of after-events that it must be viewed. The man stands in clear outline, and the greatness so rests upon sincerity unmixed with other than a simple conception of duty, vivified by an intelligent and almost intuitive appreciation of the proper course to pursue, as to defy analysis. The "modest and sage Washington" of Hamilton was the man of whom Jefferson wrote "few have lived whose opinions were more unbiassed and correct." The method was described by the man who knew him best: "He consulted much, pondered much, resolved slowly, resolved surely."



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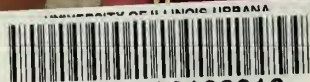
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